

CA20N

NR

-74W11

Ministry of Natural Resources  
General Publications  
[G-20]

Government  
Publications



# Wasaga Beach Provincial Park

## Preliminary Master Plan

September  
1974



*Ont. Ministry of Natural Resources*  
*[Handwritten signature]*  
*[12-13]*

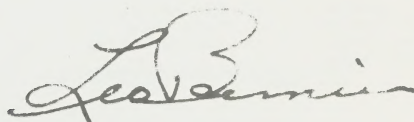
## Foreword

This document presents resource information and evaluation, a planning philosophy and recommendations for the development of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. It deals with many subjects and concerns but is not intended to be the final and definitive product with respect to this park.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has considered the comments and ideas of many residents, cottagers, tourists and day users of Wasaga Beach, but it is our intention that more of the public have an opportunity to comment upon the activities of the Province in Wasaga Beach.

This report is a PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN and is presented for public review at this time. It is intended to have relevance and flexibility so that, based on the suggestions and comments received, final plans for the future of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park may be prepared by this fall.

I hope you will read the information and proposals contained herein and participate in the Master Planning process by returning the enclosed comment sheet.



Leo Bernier,  
Minister





Many people have been involved in planning for the Provincial Park at Wasaga Beach over a period of several years. This plan is the culmination of the most recent such effort and has involved the following personnel of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

## Project Team

### Chairman

J.A. van der Meer      District Parks Supervisor

E.C. Leonard	Landscape Architect
R.H. Reynolds	Park Superintendent
R.J. Carlisle	Resource Planner
W. Yetman	Visitor Services Programmer
L.T. Taylor	Resource Manager

## Graphics and Production

Ed Leonard	Lynn Hamilton
Jan Stensson	Scott Parkes
Nancy Brown	Steve Brissenden
Askin Gokhan	

## Acknowledgements

### Ministry of Natural Resources

T. Lee	Director, Park Planning Branch
N. Richards	Master Planning Supervisor
I. Olcay	Site Planning Supervisor
J. Featherston	Central Region, Parks and Recreation Coordinator
S. George	Central Region Master Planner

### Ministry of Treasury, Economics & Intergovernmental Affairs

K. Richards	Coordinator, Wasaga Park Community Project
S. Fulton	Community Planner

### And

Grateful acknowledgement to many not listed and the residents and visitors to Wasaga Beach.

CA20N  
NR  
74W11

# Contents

## Foreward

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Overview - A Recreation Community
- 1.2 Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Master Plan

### 2. Context

- 2.1 Location
- 2.2 Access
- 2.3 Market Area
- 2.4 Visitor Use
- 2.5 Regional Recreational Opportunities

### 3. Resources

- 3.1 Cultural Resources
- 3.2 Natural Resources
- 3.3 Development Constraints

### 4. Resource Evaluation

- 4.1 Significance
- 4.2 Management Units
- 4.3 Unit Descriptions
- 4.4 Development Potential

### 5. The Park Plan

- 5.1 Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Goal
- 5.2 Objectives of Wasaga Beach Park
- 5.3 Philosophy
- 5.4 Themes and Identity
- 5.5 Park Zoning

### 6. Development Proposals

- 6.1 The Beach Areas
- 6.2 The Dunes Area
- 6.3 The Park Links
- 6.4 Visitor Services

### 7. Planning Considerations

- 7.1 Circulation
- 7.2 Activities
- 7.3 Management Items

### 8. Administrative Aspects

- 8.1 Administration Centre
- 8.2 Peak Staff Requirements
- 8.3 Phasing

### 9. Summary





Wasaga Beach·Main Street·1962

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview: A Recreation Community

Wasaga Beach, since the popular and widespread use of the automobile, has been one of the most popular destination points for recreation seekers in all of Ontario. The fine sandy beaches, shallow, clear waters of Georgian Bay and the magnetic Nottawasaga River have come together in a way which is magic to millions but which essentially is a natural base for a superb recreation resource. These aspects have not gone unrecognized as countless visitors have, for over 60 years, been drawn to the same features that many residents have always been aware of. They have come in many forms: as train travellers and the increasing numbers of automobile owners between the two wars coming to stay in grand hotels; as soldiers and swinging vacationers attracted to the dance halls and girls in the forties; and as ever swelling numbers of family groups and young people continually looking for a reliable outlet for increasing leisure time and disposable income.

Wasaga Beach has always been a resort town catering to vacationers and has built an economic base upon recreation and the leisure dollar. For many years this base was seasonal with commercial operators trying to make a year's living from Victoria Day to Labour Day. While this situation has improved recently with the widespread increase in winter sports, and snowmobiling in particular, there remains an even greater, untapped potential for this community to function as a viable, year-round centre for recreational pursuits.

The situation, in the case of Wasaga Beach, is particularly unique, in that the last decade has produced dramatic changes. A little more than ten years ago, the provincial government became involved in this area at the request of the Village to manage the beach and control the sun and fun seekers. At the same time profound changes were becoming manifest in the values and trends of people in general. The demand for cottages, for

places to go and things to do, was entering the upward swing of a long curve which has no visible end.

As provincial planners interpreted these trends and projections, they became more involved in the project and began to propose new, more far-reaching solutions for handling people and problems in Wasaga Beach. The province's earliest idea was to purchase all the land in a wide band paralleling the lake front to create facilities and parking for the thousands of people visiting the area. Subsequent plans by the province and by consultants provided continual modifications to previous thinking. This included the 1967 Master Plan by Project Planning Associates, a Toronto consulting firm. This plan was far reaching in scope and quite impractical to implement but it laid a better foundation for future planning. Further efforts by the local governments and the province culminated in the 1971 Progress Report which included a general master plan and embraced the concept of a "Park Community" at Wasaga Beach. The importance of this fact is that it set into motion the programmes for developing Wasaga Beach into a complete, serviced resort community with extensive park facilities by stages to the year 1990.

Throughout all these years of concerted planning effort, the residents and representatives of Wasaga Beach have voiced objection to the plans of the province. The loss of cottages and commercial establishments in order to provide land for provincial objectives without apparent measurable returns have been understandably difficult pills for the people of Wasaga Beach to swallow. It has taken a long time to reach a stage which is barely a start but at this time the differing and mutual objectives of both the community and the province are being realized, discussed and to a great extent respected. This document is a part of the process which will hopefully lead to a generally acceptable result.

### Recreation Community Concept

The time is right and ripe to think of Wasaga Beach as being what it is: UNIQUE; and to respond to the challenge of a rare opportunity to do what is best for the future of the community. The relationship here is unique in Ontario, possibly in Canada. In the Banff example, the town exists within the park but in Wasaga the reverse is true. However, it is not correct to think of the Provincial Park as an unwanted monster being forced upon the town. The park has now, and will have in the future, a strong role in providing recreational opportunities on a provincial scale. Furthermore, there are



advantages in the presence of a large park within the town in that it is permanently available to residents and that it will be an effective way of dealing with all the people who will continue to come to "The Beach" in the years to come.

The time is upon us when a concerted effort is made, based upon co-operation and understanding to transform this town for the future into what it has always been: a community based upon recreation, or a "Recreation Community"

The values and needs of the past are not, however unfortunately, those of the present and future. Today's plans must consider natural and cultural values; they must honour and retain the good things from the past; they must rationally consider the motives of the day, yet be read as a flexible instrument for the impossible-to-see trends of tomorrow. This is no small task.

While this Ministry is preparing a plan for the provincial park at Wasaga Beach, it is by no means un mindful of this town's heritage and for this reason has accepted the idea of a "recreation community" as being more accurate and meaningful than the term "Park Community". While the Ministry of Natural Resources accepts many of the objectives set down in 1971 it should be clearly understood that this park will not be planned in a vacuum but only in parallel with the plans for the town and in consultation with the people and the official representatives of the town of Wasaga Beach.

## Provisions

This concept of a Recreation Community provides for the following areas of development:

1. Regional Development towards the goal of a year round recreational area.
2. Service Development to furnish the area with a sewage treatment plant and central water supply system.
3. Transportation Development to form a system of main access routes and to improve internal access and circulation.
4. Commercial Development to provide new and diversified commercial facilities and tourist amenities.
5. Community Development to establish a viable community of residents, permanent and seasonal, and to ensure accommodation for tourists and visitors.
6. Provincial Park Development which is the subject of this Master Plan.

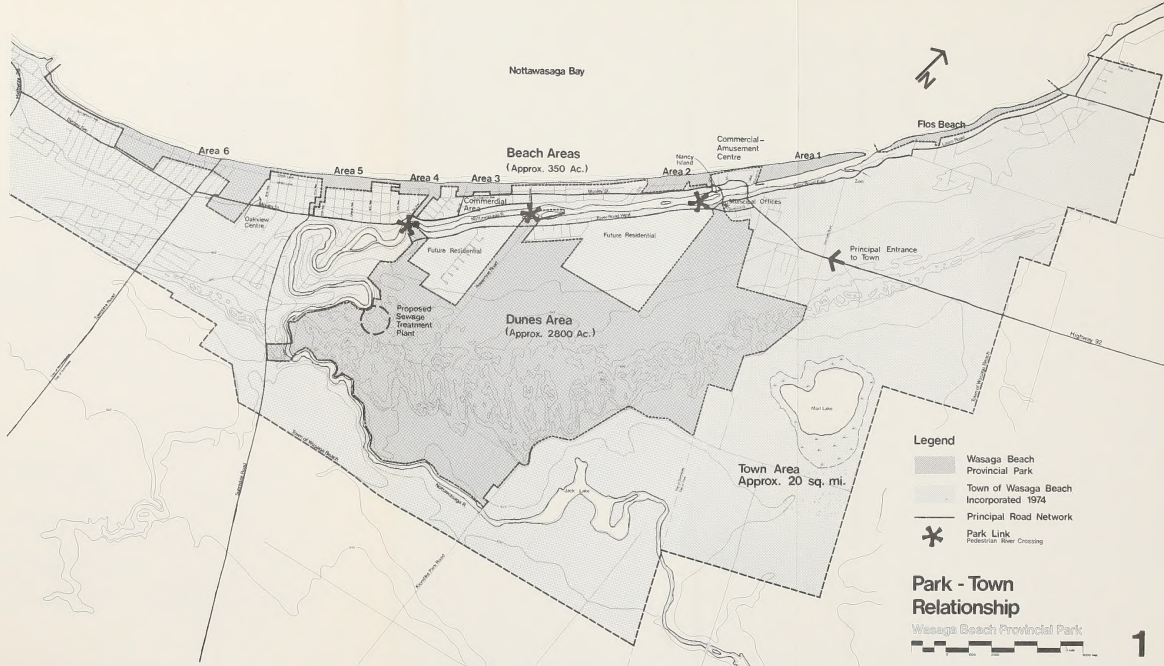
## Goals of the Recreation Community Project


To provide for:

1. A year round recreational area within a developing region as described in the proposed policy document, Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region
2. The development of a large multi-faceted park integrated with a viable community of residents and supported by a complement of tourist facilities.
3. The development of a residential community of seasonal and permanent residents provided with a good standard of necessary community services.
4. The provision of commercial facilities, including recreational and tourist accommodations, in several distinct areas to serve the needs of the residents, tourists and day visitors from a wider area.
5. The provision of a level of community and utility of services adequate for the needs of a substantial urban recreation area.
6. The provision of a system of main roads to provide ready access to this and the surrounding area for residents and visitors from the region.

Progress Report March 1971, also recognizes that "the Park, located mainly in areas requiring environmental protection and areas of prime recreational potential, is proposed to conserve the natural assets of the area and to provide a wide range of recreational activities for day-visitors, tourists, seasonal and permanent residents."







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761115483406>

# 1.2 Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Master Plan

Using the direction of past planning in the area reinforced with increased government commitment, research and new thinking, the Ministry of Natural Resources began planning in 1973, for its part of the recreation community: The Provincial Park.

Many considerations are evaluated to determine the role or roles of a specific provincial park. Planners look at the resources of the park and its surrounding area, the demands that may be made on the park and the total "market area," or park user base which is comprised of those people who visit or will visit the park. The planning process weighs the various factors, giving emphasis to different elements which determine or structure park development according to policies, demand and potential.

This document is a summation of that process. It is a statement of direction for the development and operation of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park.

## Park Goal

The basic principle underlying Park development at Wasaga Beach as defined by Progress Report - March 1971, is to promote and develop recreational opportunities in the area with minimum compromise to the community and the land.

This direction, supported by analysis of the resources associated with the park, and of the recreation demand, led to the establishment of the following Goal for Wasaga Beach Provincial Park:

*To provide for the people of Ontario and the community of Wasaga Beach a wide range of year round recreational, interpretive, educational, and scientific opportunities associated with recreation and natural resources of provincial significance, while contributing towards the economy of the recreation community.*

## Explanation of Goal

In planning Wasaga Beach Provincial Park it has been accepted that there are a variety of needs to satisfy and responsibilities to meet.

The proposed Provincial Park lies entirely within the boundaries of the Town of Wasaga Beach and, as directed by Progress Report - March 1971, should enhance the recreation community by providing recreational facilities, activities and events that will attract both short and long term visitors. As a park within a community, it should also provide some community-oriented recreational facilities for the residents of the resort town.

The relationship between the provincial park and the Town of Wasaga Beach is illustrated in Figure 1.

The physical character of the proposed Park boundaries suggests that the satisfaction of this variety of needs and responsibilities is feasible.

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park will be divided into two major areas which will administratively operate as one park but which functionally will represent distinctly different zones and activities.

The Beach Area of the Park is comprised of seven units totalling approximately 350 acres and linked by 10 miles of fine sandy beaches and the waters of Nottawasaga Bay. This part is designed to be an intensively used recreation park, developed to complement existing commercial and residential aspects of the resort town.

The Park also encompasses a large portion of a Provincially significant natural system which has highly fragile geomorphological and botanical components. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources, through the Park, to maintain and preserve representative portions of this system and its components for future generations.

This park section, referred to as the Dunes Area, is comprised of some 2200 acres and will be designed to provide for passive and space requiring recreational uses while still providing varying degrees of protection for the natural environment.

Historic sites and themes of Wasaga Beach range from local to provincial significance. Such themes will be developed and interpreted in conjunction with both the Beach and Dunes Areas of the Park.

In addition, three strategically located "Park Links" will be developed as new or improved locations for pedestrian crossing of the Nottawasaga River between the Beach and Dunes Areas and the community areas adjacent to the park.

# 2. Context

## 2.2 Access

### 2.1 Location - Setting

Wasaga Beach is a well known recreation resort community ideally situated in Simcoe County at the southern end of Georgian Bay. It is easily accessible to millions of tourists and recreators and by virtue of its natural structure has become a popular destination for these people for the last forty years. Refer to Figure 2.

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park is located entirely within the Town of Wasaga Beach. The Town, which was created on January 1, 1974, encompasses 20 square miles and incorporates, in its structure, the former Village of Wasaga Beach and annexed parts of Sunnidale, Nottawasaga and Flos townships. Refer to Figure 1.

The Wasaga Beach area has been primarily noted for its beaches and for summer use, but the popularity of snowmobiling, the proximity of major ski areas and the favourable aspect of the area for snow suggests more significant potential for year round use than presently is shown.

The provincial park will comprise more than 3000 acres of the town complex and is expected to enhance the all-seasons recreational capability of Wasaga Beach.

Wasaga Beach has only been accessible to travellers from southern Ontario and other parts of the Province since the late 1940's and 50's. Today, Ontario's main north-south arteries, Highways 400 and 27 direct travellers to Wasaga Beach via Highways 92 and 26. The former leads directly to the resort's present commercial core at the bridge terminus of Highway 92 and the latter directs traffic to Wasaga Beach via Byrnes Avenue and the cottaged shores of Brock's, Springhurst and Oakview Beaches. (Refer to figure 2).

Two access roads off Highway 26 are used by visitors more familiar with the area; Townline Road (County Road 7) and Sunnidale Road (County 10) provide direct access to the Springhurst and Oakview Beach areas.

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications (M.T.C.) has completed two studies affecting the Wasaga Beach area.

#### 1. *Highway Planning Study Barrie - Simcoe County*

This plan deals with proposals affecting the Simcoe County region and specifically recommends:

- a. "a Barrie-Collingwood arterial is proposed to serve travel desires between Highway 400 and the Wasaga Beach, Stayner, Collingwood areas .... and to provide basic transportation corridor ..... The proposal involves expansion of Highway 92 and a new alignment of Highway 26 west from Highway 27 towards Collingwood. A route has been chosen for this Highway 426, but the commitment to build is considered in the long range by M.T.C. (after 1976). Refer to figure 3.
- b. "Wasaga Beach - Midland Highway: A new highway is recommended along the shore area of Nottawasaga Bay from Wasaga Beach to Midland. This proposal envisions a scenic or parkway route to be designed in harmony with recreational and environmental considerations of the area. Again this is a long range proposal. No route has been selected.

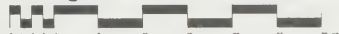




## Location/Access

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park

2



2. *Feasibility Study February 1974*  
*Internal Road System*  
*Wasaga Park Community*

This study deals with proposals and considerations related to local traffic systems. Those aspects which affect or influence the provincial park are outlined below. (Refer also to Figure 3.)

- a. A major concern of the M.T.C. study is the expected need for a new or improved East-West arterial corridor south of the Nottawasaga River to relieve traffic loads on existing roads and to serve future community residential areas. In all, three alternatives have been investigated:
- (1) Corridor "A" consists of an extension and widening of existing River Road West to link Mosley Street, the Schoonertown Bridge and Highway 92.
  - (2) Corridor "B" consists of a new alignment south of River Road West between the Bridge and Highway 92, cutting through portions of the Dunes Area and the communities.
  - (3) Corridor "C" was proposed as a southerly route through the dune area bypassing most Town residential development but was discarded as undesirable by M.T.C. shortly after presentation.

Of these alternatives, the Ministry of Natural Resources strongly prefers the first, especially as a short term measure with the understanding that time and additional study will affect any future decision to build an additional roadway.

This Ministry concurs with the unsuitability of route C because of the probable adverse effects it would entail to the dunes.

Corridor B, has less negative impact than C and is acceptable as a long-range requirement to serve the community. The proposal that this road be a limited access, "rural" type route is entirely appropriate to the park setting proposed in this plan.

b. Overall Network

The Feasibility study further recommends access to the Recreation Community via Highway 26 (new alignment) to the various collector roads: Townline Road (County Road 7), Sunnidale Road, Klondike Park Road to Powerline and Golf Course Roads and by means of the Eastern Access Road to Highway 92.

M.T.C. proposes that in later phases of planning of the Wasaga area, access to the central area will be necessary via Powerline Road.

Of all the internal improvements that M.T.C. proposes, the development of Powerline Road as an access route is the lowest priority.

This master plan recommends that Powerline Road be transferred to the province for immediate use as an internal park road with the understanding that long term requirements may result in its use as a public collector road.

For the short term, more emphasis should be placed on Sunnidale Road as a collector road and that this Ministry consult with M.T.C. to consider alignment improvements to Golf Course Road. (Figure 3.)







# 2.3 Market Area

In this plan it has been accepted that the distance which people can travel in two hours is a reasonable limit to achieve a day's recreation experience. This does not include those on extended-period vacations who comprise much of the market to the Wasaga Beach region.

Approximately 5 million persons or 70% of Ontario's population reside within this 2 hour range of Wasaga Beach. These people represent the basic potential market for short-term visitors to Wasaga Beach.

The population within this major market area is one of the greatest concentrations per unit area in Canada and is expected to increase by a rate of 32% by 1991. (Refer to Figure 4.)

# 2.4 Visitor Use

Accessibility to the greatest number of people as well as the type and variety of facilities, and special characteristics or features of a Park affect the degree of use which that park experiences.

Traffic counters and numbers of permits sold at beach gates (over a 10 year period) reveal that Wasaga Beach is akin to a teeming mobile city almost every weekend in the summer.

Beach user surveys conducted in 1962, 1967, 1970-73, indicate that the majority of visitors are day visitors from the Toronto area, that they have consciously chosen to visit Wasaga for a beach experience (sun, sand, and water), and that "people" are part of that experience.

Certainly Wasaga Beach fulfills the requirements of day-use demand in respect to resource character and availability, location and accessibility, but, Wasaga Beach is also a resort town with many seasonal residences and tourist accommodations and it is a permanent home for many more.

There are four basic categories of "users" of Wasaga Beach, each having different needs and demands on Park and Community facilities. Within the categories of:

- Residents
- Cottagers (Seasonal Residents)
- Tourists
- Day Visitors,

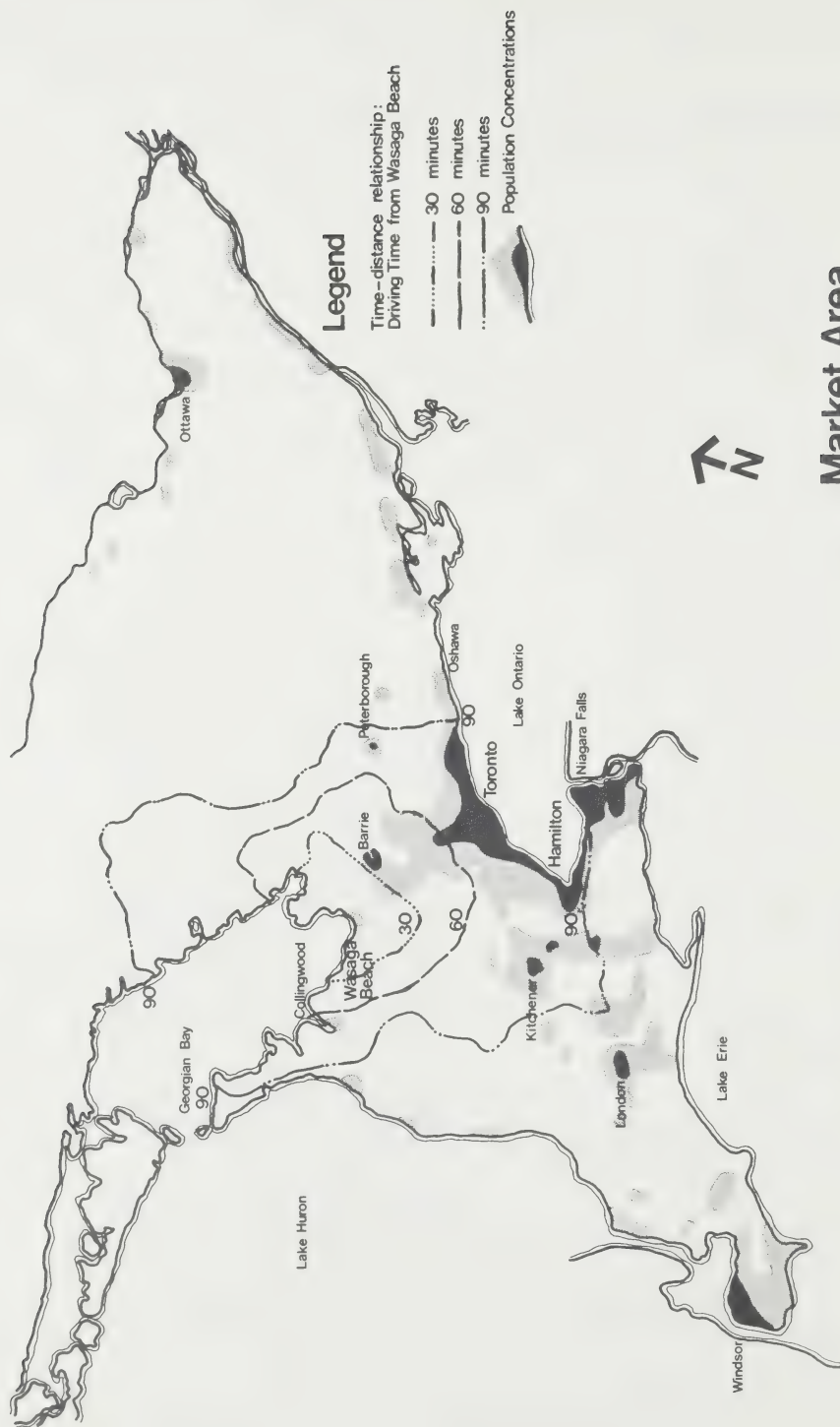
there are groups of persons that require additional consideration. Of the permanent population of Wasaga Beach, 24% are senior citizens. This group is increasing in size and already gives Wasaga almost twice the Provincial average of residents over 60.

Family groups traditionally represent the largest user group in Provincial Parks and Wasaga Beach is ideally situated for family activity. Many of the seasonal residents, tourists and day visitors are family groups.

There are large numbers groups representing various cultural backgrounds who use the beach both as seasonal residents and day users. Their traditions of recreational use add a new dimension to provincial park usage which must be considered.

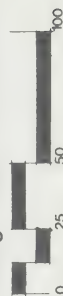
Finally, Wasaga Beach has always been an attraction to the youth of the province (16-25 years of age) who flock to the area on weekends to enjoy its amenities.

The identification and recognition of this variety of user groups and their characteristics necessitates great flexibility in planning for the use and enjoyment of the Provincial Park within the community.



## Market Area

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park



# Description of Park Users

## 1. Residents

### Present Statistics

Within the new Town of Wasaga Beach there are approximately 3,200 residents (1974).

Surveys indicate that very few of the residents use the beach for active summer recreation. Many do, however, participate in snowmobiling activities in the winter.

### Trends

Projections for the future suggest about 10,500 permanent residents by 1986 (Progress Report 1971).

With a growing population, especially in the retired group and within the concepts of a Recreation Community, it appears the Province will have an increased responsibility towards the permanent residents of Wasaga Beach in facilities planned in the park.

### Needs

At present, many residents are working in the recreation-tourist industry and have little time to become involved in recreational activities which are summer and day oriented.

There is a need to provide a variety of activities and facilities, land and water based, that will give the full range of age groups of residents the opportunity to become involved recreationally at different times of the day and throughout the year.

## 2. Cottagers (Seasonal Residents)

### Present Statistics

The estimated summer population of cottagers is between 10,000 and 11,000 persons.

Surveys indicate considerable use of the beach by cottagers, principally during the week, but on weekends also.

### Trends

Projections for the future range as high as 25,000 seasonal cottagers but these estimates are subject to downward revisions within the forthcoming Official Plan for the Town. More and more of the summer cottages are being winterized and there is an increasing trend towards year round use of residences by their owners. Many express a desire to participate in local events and many seek to eventually retire in the Town of Wasaga Beach. This trend generally means a growth of the "resident" group balanced by a reduction of "seasonal" numbers.

### Needs

Accessibility to the beach is of prime concern to most cottagers. Availability of a variety of activities and facilities, land and water based, for all age groups, information concerning regional attractions, and programs designed to encourage involvement of seasonal residents in local activities are recognized as requirements which can be met most effectively through co-operation between park and community recreation programmers.

## 3. Tourists

### Present Statistics

A number of privately owned cottages are rented on a weekly basis during the summer. It is estimated that there are commercial cottage, motel and hotel accommodations for between 3,500 and 5,000 persons in Wasaga Beach at this time. There are 14 private campgrounds offering 958 campsites within ten miles of Wasaga Beach.

### Trends

Future projections estimate as may as 14,000 tourists accommodated on a peak day by 1986 (Progress Report 1971). Changing trends in leisure time will no doubt affect the tourist industry but plans within Wasaga Beach Recreation Community will remain as flexible and sensitive as possible to changes in demands and preferences.

Many accommodations are winterized to provide facilities for the increasing trend towards year round recreational activities.

### Needs

Tourists most commonly seek out points of interest in and around their destination. The Provincial Park should provide a wide variety of recreational and educational activities, opportunities and facilities as well as providing information on additional events, and attractions in the community and vicinity.

## 2.5 Other Opportunities

### 4. Day Users

#### Present Statistics

From the 1970 Beach User Survey, (Sunday August 9, 1970), 68% of those surveyed were day-users and 62% of the visitors came from Toronto. A survey conducted on Sunday July 30, 1972, showed that 59% of the users were day-users and 44% were from Toronto.

Licence plate surveys in 1973 showed that on holiday weekends, between 63% and 64% of cars in the Park had Toronto issued Licence plates.

These percentages represent several thousand persons at any one time from a given origin. The nature of counting varies greatly between traffic counters (24 hour periods), permit sales (8 hours) and sample surveys, but interpolation and market area studies indicate that Wasaga Beach should be prepared to handle over 1 million visitors in a single season.

#### Trends

The current attraction for day-users at Wasaga Beach is the beach itself. Two hours driving time represents the time most people will travel to achieve a day's recreation activity and this range from Wasaga Beach presently encompasses 5 million persons. Day-use demand will conceivably increase at the same rate as population growth or 3.4% per year.

Even with high water levels drastically reducing the amount of beach available to visitors, the total recorded attendance at Wasaga Beach Provincial Park in 1973 was still greater than at all other provincial parks in Ontario except Pinery and Algonquin.

Facilities developed within the park will provide for the needs of large numbers of day visitors. To meet the projected peak demand (as high as 35,000 people in one day) without usurping vital space, requires meaningful information systems, alternative transportation methods, flexibility and multiple-use potential in park areas to minimize pressures on the community.

#### Needs

Presently, the day-user is attracted to Wasaga Beach by the beach itself in search of sun, sand and water-oriented experience and in search of social interaction. Basic facilities required are, parking, washrooms, change houses concessions, (refreshments) and shelters.

A more significant effort should be made to promote day uses at times other than the summer and to complement the community in providing recreational activities and opportunities for a wide spectrum of people and interests.

### Intervening

Assuming that the Toronto-centred Region is a major source of recreationists seeking a beach experience, and that two hours represents the time they will travel to achieve a day's recreation, then it can be shown that Wasaga Beach offers 74% of the supply of provincial park bathing beaches available to this market. Fourteen other Provincial Parks within two hours of Toronto offer a total of 3.9 miles, and Wasaga alone offers 10 miles of public beach. In other words, there are not many areas that will intervene between the user and a beach experience at Wasaga Beach.

### Complementary

Simcoe County is promoted by the Huronia Tourist Association as having a significant number of tourist attractions, ranging from historic sites, museums, and zoos to other Provincial Parks, Conservation Authority Areas, natural areas, recreation facilities and commercial attractions. Rather than detract from the tourist and recreation potential of Wasaga Beach, this wealth of available features enhances the role of Wasaga Beach as both a destination and as a centre from which to visit other attractions in the region. (See Figure 5.)



# Legend

- \* provincial park
- conservation area - day use
- conservation area - campsites
- ⊕ ski area
- ▲ marina
- ✈ airport

5

## Recreation Opportunities



# 3. Resources

## 3.1 Cultural Resources

### Early History

From Prehistoric times, the Nottawasaga River had been the main artery of man's activities. Initial human activity in the Wasaga Beach area probably occurred during the Archaic cultural period (5000 - 1000 B.C.).

Archaeological evidence of Saugeen Indian fishing encampments along the Nottawasaga River has been recorded within the Park. These people occupied areas of Southwestern Ontario about the time of Christ.

No direct evidence has been found to indicate that Huron or Petun peoples used the area's resources as part of their subsistence pattern; however, it is known historically that Hurons often travelled through this area on their way to Petun country.

During the latter historic period, Algonkian people who had moved into areas abandoned by the Ontario Iroquois (Huron and Petun) used the River for transportation and for fishing.

The first European influence on the area also centred on the River. British fur trade and military supply routes to the northwest followed along the Nottawasaga River into the Bay and north to the Fort Michilimackinac.

During the War of 1812, the British schooner H.M.S. Nancy was sunk at the mouth of the River by three U.S. ships and a small garrison was built by the British at Schoonertown in 1814-15. However, when Penetanguishene became a focal point for the military, Schoonertown faded and the Nottawasaga River became less important as a transportation route. (Figure 6.)

Nineteenth century entrepreneurs logged white pine from the dunes and the beach. At least five sawmills were operating in the Wasaga area between the 1830's and 1890's. The shallowness of the River and sandbars in the Oxbow area created transportation problems for ships. When the Railway bypassed Wasaga Beach for Collingwood in 1855 hopes and prospects for industrial development ended.

When the beach had been cleared of its white pine, it became a long, narrow sandy roadway.

### Recent History

During the 1920's and 1930's little development took place. The first paved road (now Highway 26) did not approach Wasaga Beach until 1930, and even then this was a single-lane road. A second lane was added in 1947. However, Highway 92 (Elmvale to the Wasaga Beach bridge) was paved in 1940 and the root of traffic congestion was extended.

Then the influx of soldiers from Camp Borden during W.W. II and widespread availability of the automobile started a trend to increasing day use and wild weekend spree. Inexpensive tourist cabins and hundreds of cottages spread along the beach. Finally, the construction of Highway 400 during the early 1950's brought more and more day-visitors from Toronto and surrounding areas. The resort was transformed into a melange of hotels, motels and amusement centres interspread with cottages, cabins, variety stores and snack bars.

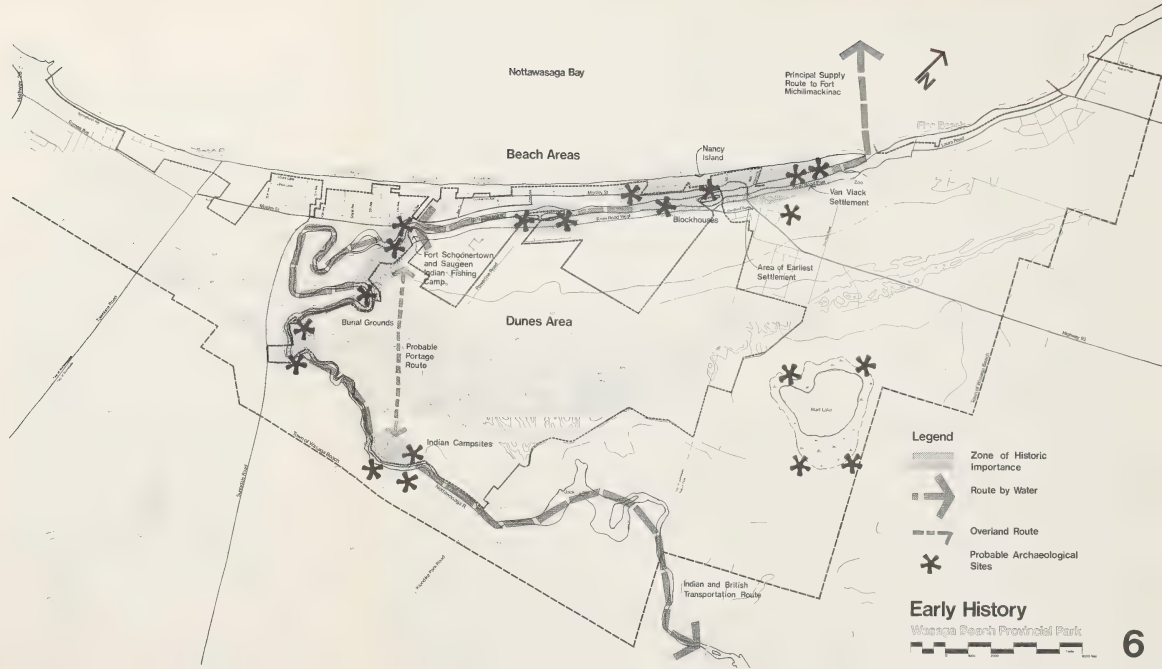
The following quote, written by R. Wolfe in *Recreation in Ontario*, University of Toronto 1948 summarizes the development of Wasaga Beach. It could have been written very recently.

*"The present state of affairs is the inevitable result of the resort's haphazard and unpremeditated growth. It is equally the result of the fact that Wasaga is purely a summer resort, and nothing else".*

And this further quote from R.Wolfe, 1948, applied until the summer of 1973, when the Ministry of Natural Resources, finally removed automobile traffic from the beach.

*"the most obvious disability that Wasaga labours under, and the one that disturbs thoughtful visitors most strongly, is the inadequacy of the road system --- that has turned the resort's chief asset, its splendid beach, into the hazardous, odourous highway it has become."*

In 1962-63 the Village of Wasaga Beach and Townships of Sunnidale and Nottawasaga, seeking assistance, transferred management of the beach to the Ontario government. In 1967, the Province commissioned a firm of consultants to recommend future direction of the community. In 1971, direction had been established and government commitment to aid in the development of Wasaga Beach as a year round recreation community was outlined in *Wasaga Park Community Project: Progress Report 1971*.







## 3.2 Natural Resources

### Water

Wasaga Beach lies at the head of Nottawasaga Bay, whose clean, clear waters are a major attraction for swimmers. Up to six parallel sets of sand bars render the water shallow, enabling bathers to wade and swim safely, sometimes hundreds of feet into the bay. Shallow waters warm easily, making the cool waters of the Bay even more pleasant for bathing.

The Great Lakes are subject to water level changes which occur at irregular intervals. These levels have a great effect on the width of the dry beach at Wasaga because of its long, gentle slope. Old timers remember two or three periods when the beach was as narrow as in 1973, but they also remember when the dry beach was over two hundred feet wide. It will, no doubt, continue ever thus.

The Nottawasaga River empties into the Bay at Wasaga Beach, its waters murky with suspended sands, clays and organic matter. The organic matter settles into troughs in the Nottawasaga Bay, to be churned up during storms and deposited by currents along the beach. This muck, or detritus, studied by the Ministry in 1972, was found to be composed of natural materials (leaves and twigs, partially decomposed). Unsightly and unpleasant to wade through, it is however, no pollution hazard, only a management problem. (Refer to Figure 7.)

The Nottawasaga River is important as a sports fishery, utilized heavily by anglers, spring, summer and fall. They fish from the banks, from canoes and rowboats, and near the mouth from power boats.

The Nottawasaga River, historically a major transportation route, is now becoming popular as a canoe route, both for casual trips and for races.

### Climate

Weather is one of the contributing factors to the attractivity of Wasaga Beach.

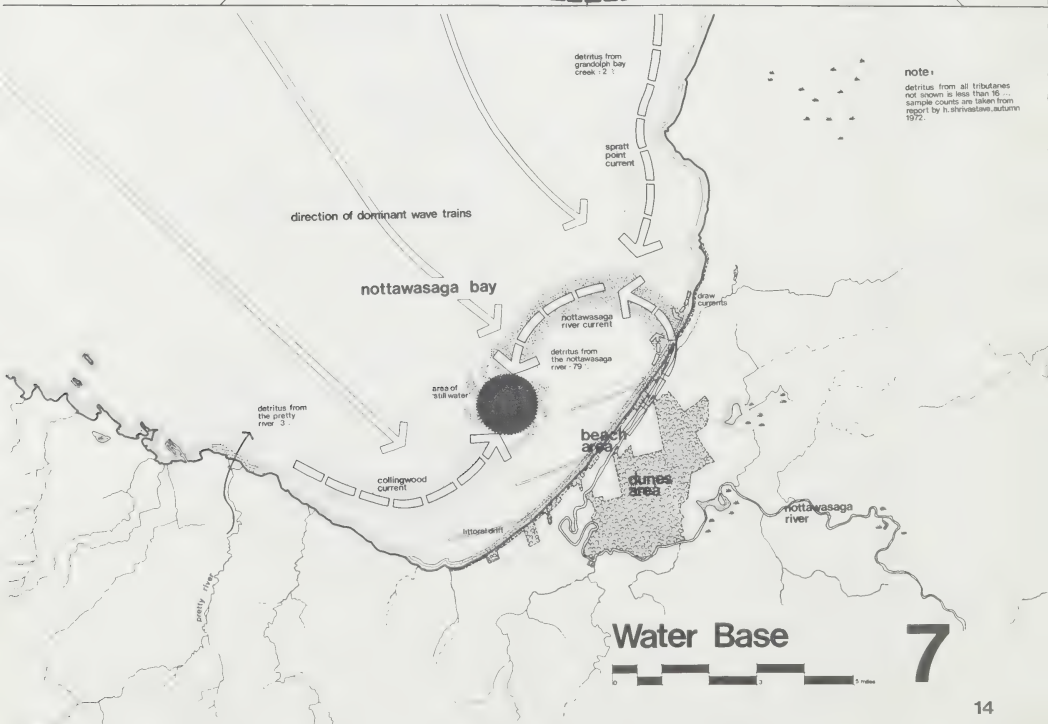
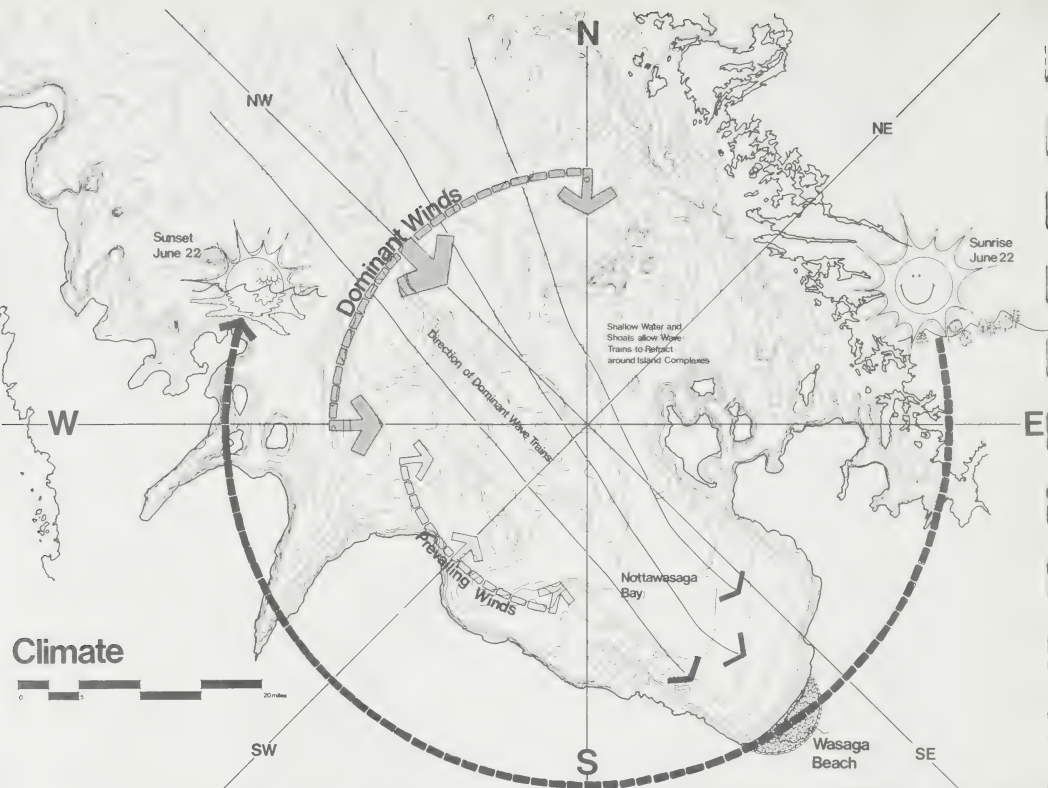
The climate is generally the same as that of most southern Ontario; mid-latitude, humid continental, however, it is locally moderated by prevailing winds blowing on-shore across a vast expanse of Georgian Bay waters. This results in generally cooler summer temperatures, warmer and snowier winters, and a long cool spring.

Spectacular sunsets and cloud formations are visible regularly as the sun sets over the Bay in summer and moves towards Blue Mountain, silhouetting the Niagara Escarpment in fall and winter.

Mild sunny weather complements the shallow, sloping shores of fine sand and the clear, clean waters of the Bay, rendering Wasaga Beach one of the finest public bathing beaches in the Province. (Figure 7)

Warm temperatures on a beach are a great thing. When one gets too hot, one merely plunges into the water.

People, however, may react differently to the heat in the dunes. In the summer time, open prairie areas often have ground temperatures approaching 130°F and even the forested dunes may achieve ground temperatures of 120°F. Very hot ground and hot still air can make the foredunes and parabolic dunes areas very uncomfortable in the summer. Spring, fall and winter, though, are different stories, for then, moderate temperatures and tree-stilled air help make these areas aesthetically very pleasing for the walker, snowshoer, or cross-country skier.



## Geology and Geomorphology

### Evolution

Bedrock plays only a minor role in the geo-history of Wasaga. The Wasaga Beach geomorphological system is the result of the power of wind and the movement of water shaping and reshaping the debris left behind by glaciers. (Figure 8)

When the glaciers retreated about 12,000 years ago the Wasaga area was a large shallow estuary of Glacial Lake Algonquin. As the ice retreated from Ontario, the lake in the Georgian Bay basin drained down hundreds of feet below present water levels. Without the great weight of ice, the land began rising. The drainage exit became higher, and water levels rose again. About 6,000 years ago the waves of this rising lake, (Lake Nipissing) gathered up sands and gravels of the sandy glacial tills, and deposited them in a large bar across the bay mouth.

The development of the baymouth bar created a lagoon to the south which drained through a brach in the bar, into the Bay. Exposed sands began to move, blown by winds, and collected in small dunes, as are common behind many dry sand beaches; but as the winds continued and the dunes were not stabilized by complete vegetative cover, the sand continued to move, travelling by wind, distances of over a mile and falling and collecting into larger dunes, which developed in a "horseshoe" shape. These parabolic dunes, composed of hundreds of years of blowing sands, are up to 150 feet high.

As time went on, the scanty vegetation spread, perhaps in response to a change in the climate, and covering the dunes, it halted the movement of the sand.

Post glacial Lake Nipissing, did not stay stable during all of this. Water levels dropped in stages down to the present average level of about 580 feet above sea level, and at each stage in this level change a beach was created and left behind. These old beaches are in evidence as a set of ridges and swales (troughs) running parallel to the present shoreline. At one time each was probably similar to the existing beach shoreline.

## Components of the System

The Wasaga Beach area, then, represents a geomorphological system associated with the glacial lakes and the development of a baymouth bar. This system has six major elements. (Figure 9).

1. Ten miles of shallow, sloping, fine, sand, active beach.
2. A band of parallel recurring ridges and swales known as raised beaches.
3. An area of alluvial sediment which has been reworked by the Nottawasaga River.
4. An area of foredunes that undulate randomly inland of the raised beaches.
5. A band of large, parabolic or U-shaped dunes that often exceed 100 feet in vertical relief.
6. Low flat areas of Marl or lagoon sediment, now occupied by Jack's Lake, Marl Lake and surrounding farm fields and woodlots.

## Biology

### Flora

Botanists have identified twenty-six biological communities within the geomorphological system of Wasaga Beach. Of these, twenty-two occur within the boundaries of the dune park, as illustrated in Figure 10.

These communities occur in close association with components of the geomorphological system. The raised beaches exhibit a striking pattern of dry vegetation on the ridges and wet bog communities in the swales. The vegetation in the dunes varies from open desert (blowouts) through prairie, prairie heath, and savannah to closed forest cover. Many of the dunes species are native xeric species, pre-adapted colonizers of dry sands.

The floodplain and river basin areas contain typical floodplain - meadow and forest species.

Only the farmed fields and two pine plantations are deviations from natural development systems.

Many of the communities and species now existing in the dune fields are not common in Ontario, and appear to have held on to this sandy dry area from a period perhaps 4,000 years in the past when climatic conditions were much drier. And while the normal succession process would suggest that all of the prairie should now have advanced to fully closed forest, botanists suggest that frequent fires (both of natural and human origin) have been instrumental in maintaining the vegetative communities of Wasaga Beach in all stages of succession.

## Fauna

Thick, rich dense vegetation is found only in a few isolated spots in the Wasaga Beach area. Most of the area is dry, sandy and hot, with fragile vegetation clinging tenuously to the unconsolidated soils. Thus, although most of the normal species of small mammals are found (chipmunks, squirrels, mice, rabbits, raccoons, etc.) they are not found in large numbers. The land just cannot support large animal population.

Deer do not "overwinter" in this area, but in the late summer and fall they do feed in the dunes and along the river.

This area exhibits an interesting mix of birdlife. The shoreline, river, raised beaches and dunes, all have their own sets of species that are commonly found. But, most are noted in spring and fall during migration. The harsh conditions of the dunes seem to limit the numbers of residents and nesting species.

The Nottawasaga River is a very important recreational fishing source in Southern Ontario, pickerel and trout being the most notable and commonly sought by fishermen.

## 3.3 Development Constraints

### Vegetative Fragility

A study in the summer and fall of 1973 investigated the twenty-two plant communities found within the dune park. Careful evaluation was given to each species in a community, on the basis of relative numbers, rate of recovery if disturbed, aesthetics, role of the species in the presence of other species and so on. After all species in a community were evaluated, and given a numerical rating, their values were totaled to give a community fragility rating. Figure 11 indicates only the four most fragile communities within the Wasaga dunes system.

It is important to note that almost all of the communities would rank in the top 20% of a provincial ranking system. In short, with very little use, the biological communities of the dunes park will be destroyed or seriously modified.

This conclusion is based on research by a University of Guelph graduate student in which a number of ground cover sites were subjected to different amounts of trampling. In some areas as few as 8 trips per day for 3 weeks will destroy all ground cover, exposing bare sand.

### Slope

The dunes are made up of unconsolidated sands, which, having been positioned where they are by wind sorting, are subject to further wind movement if exposed. In this area, slopes greater than 10° or 5° should be protected or carefully altered.

In the larger dunes, many of the slopes approach the natural angle of repose for sand of this shape and size; that is, the steepest angle that sand can rest at without starting to move by gravity.

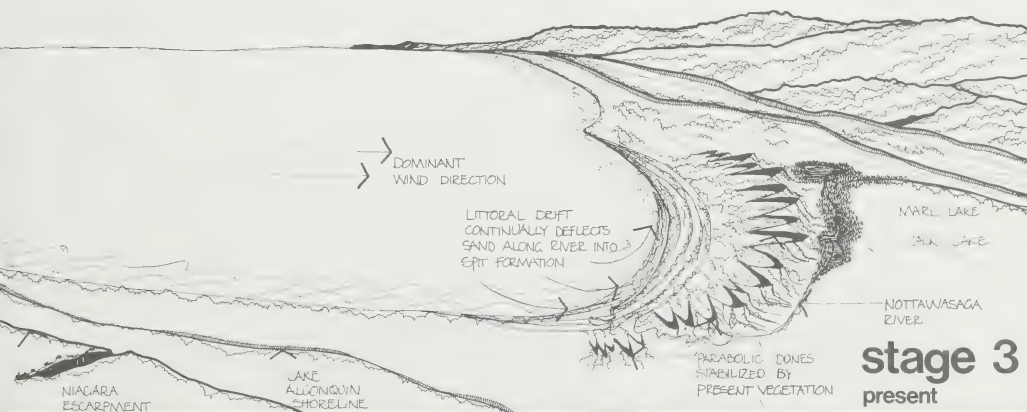
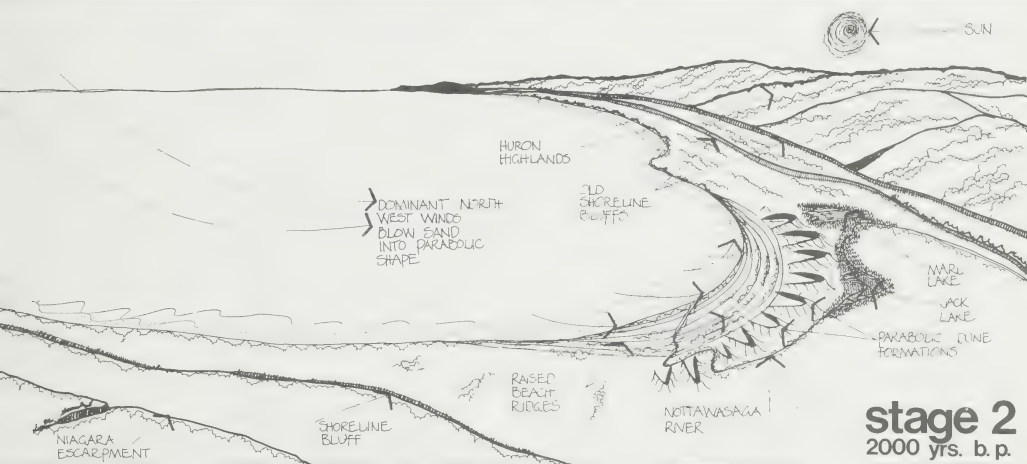
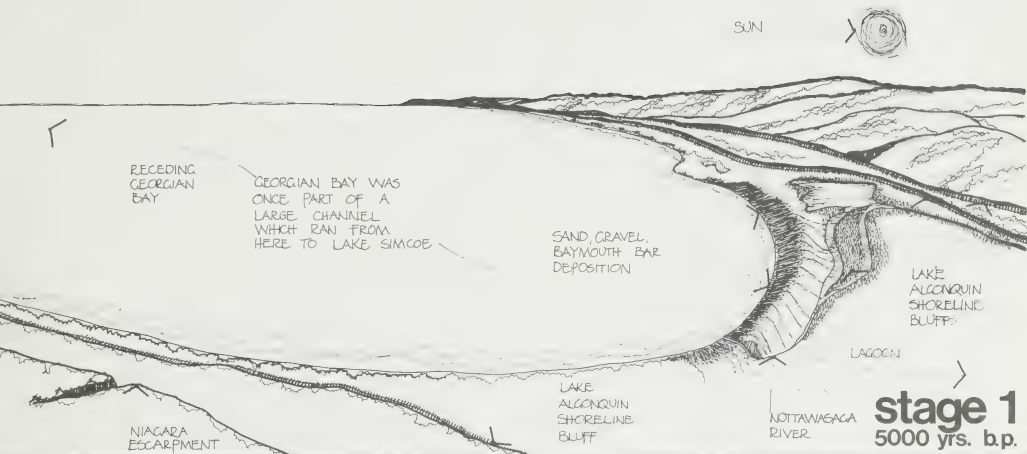
The steepness of slopes, fragility of vegetative cover stabilizing slopes, and the propensity of the unconsolidated sands to wind movement all suggest that hillsides (dune sides) are more fragile and subject to deterioration through excessive use than the flatter areas.

### Water Table

With only slight elevation above Georgian Bay and the Nottawasaga River, much of the land has a high water table, especially the raised beaches and lagoon areas. This places constraints on installation of septic systems, construction and maintenance of some facilities (such as roads), and general desirability for recreation activities.

### Existing Development

While the Dunes Area of the park is relatively natural in appearance, it has undergone some development, or been subjected to some utilization. These changes are manifested by road and hydro cuts, plantations, excavations and other human activities.



# Formation of Wasaga Beach and Dunes 8



# 4. Resource Evaluation

## 4.1 Significance of the Resources of Wasaga Beach

The following are conclusions about the significance of the various resources of Wasaga Beach:

### Geomorphology

- There are other baymouth bar systems on the Great Lakes. None, however, show
  - the combination of raised beaches, foredunes and parabolic dunes to the extent of Wasaga Beach.
- Wasaga Beach has the only known set of parabolic dunes in Ontario. Even
  - compared to other sets of large dunes of different types, these are the least disturbed by man's activity.
- The foredunes 10 to 20 feet high, are representative of general dune systems anywhere in the Great Lakes.
- Both the foredunes and parabolic dunes are composed of unconsolidated wind blown
  - sands. If vegetative cover is broken, these sands are subject to further movement by the wind.
- There is one other similar set of raised
  - beaches on the Great Lakes, near Ipperwash on Lake Huron. It is not under Crown ownership.
- Lagoon sequences, floodplains and the rivers edge are not unlike many similar features elsewhere. Their significance
  - lies in their relationship to other features as part of a geomorphological system.
- The dunes area of the park, unsuitable for agriculture, and not yet subjected to residential development is still a fairly natural area.

### Biology

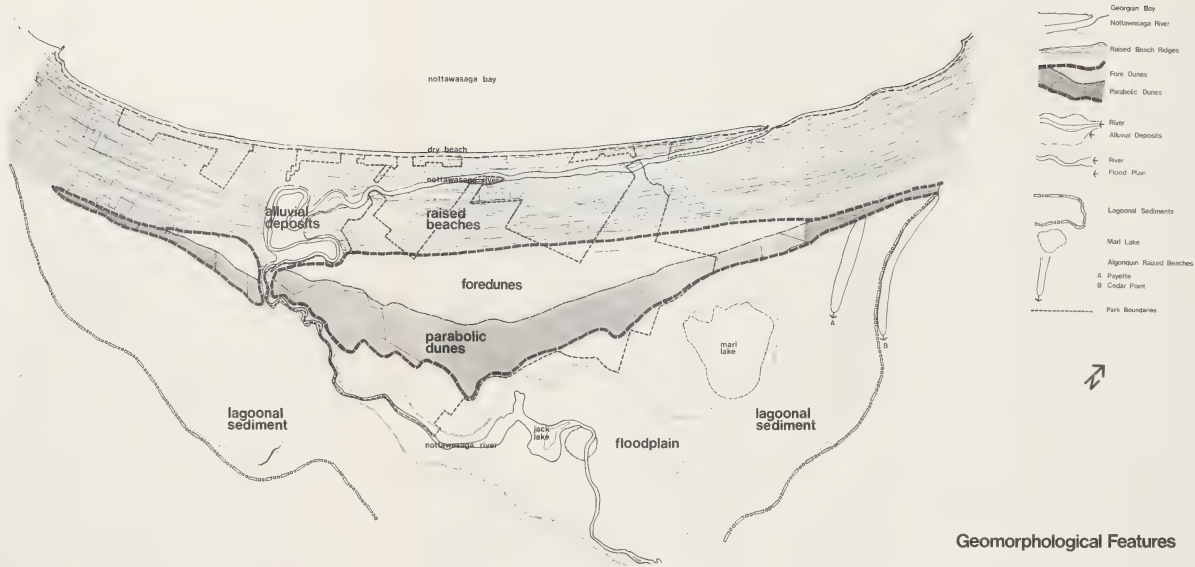
- The whole area exhibits a strong visible
  - relationship between the geology and biology (especially in the raised beaches).
- There are many interesting species here. Many are uncommon in Southern Ontario, but abundant in the Wasaga Beach area. Some are species found only on special
  - habitat. They are limited in distribution. Some are northern species that have their southern most station here; some are western species with their eastern most station here.
- Some communities such as prairie and prairie heath, which are not commonly found in Ontario are represented here in large units.
- A sequence of communities and species exists from bare sand to closed forest.
  - This sequence has probably existed continuously, maintained by fires.
- If completely protected, this sequence
  - would, through succession, evolve completely to closed forest.

### History

- The prehistory of the Wasaga Beach area
  - is still speculative. Archaeological surveys are not complete.
- Military and settlement history of Wasaga Beach is of regional significance, not very important on the provincial scale.

### Recreation

- The development of Wasaga Beach as a
  - recreation resource is of provincial significance.
- The Beach, stable, gently sloping and very long is one of the great beaches on the Great Lakes.
- The River is at least regionally significant as a sports fishery, and is gaining importance as a recreational canoeing route.



















# 4.2 Management Units

The Dunes Area of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park as described in the preceding sections, is little known, highly complex and extremely delicate. This condition suggests that "the dunes" be carefully analyzed and more carefully planned to ensure that "the provision of a wide variety of recreational possibilities, "as stated in the park goal does not jeopardize the existence of irretrievable natural resources. While it is not economically or practically possible to own and selectively protect or develop all of the dunes, the lands proposed for the park do offer potential for both.

The process of analysis to determine selected use potentials for an area has produced Management Units. These units are basically more workable sub-sections of the geomorphological zones (fig.9) and are determined by specific natural factors such as biology, water table, drainage and slope or by artificial factors such as boundaries and human interference in the landscape. Figure 13 locates these units and indicates a potential degree of development for each (as described in section 4.4). The management units are listed and described in the following sections.

Management Unit	Acreage	Development Potential
1. Beach	150 Acres	3
2. Raised Beaches		
2a. Ross' Woods	30	2
2b. Oakview Woods	40	2 to 4
2c. Racetrack Section	15	4
2d. Central Raised Beaches	120	1
2e. Eastern Raised Beaches	80	2
3. Foredunes		
3a. Racetrack Section	210	4
3b. Foredunes Section	460	1
3c. East Section	300	2
4. Parabolic Dunes		
4a. West Section	200	2
4b. Central Section	480	1
4c. East Section	300	2
5. Areas of Lagoonal Sediments		
5a. Nottawasaga River Section	200	3
5b. Sage Farm	100	3
6. Nottawasaga River Shoreline	130	2 to 4
7. Sand Plain	40	3
8. Geological Cross Section	15	1
9. Park Links		
9a. Schoonertown Link	15	4
9b. Powerline-Joan Link	60	4
9c. Nancy Island Link	40	4
	3285 Acres	

# 4.3 Unit Descriptions

## The Beach

Ten miles of long, wide, sandy, shallow beach, with up to six submerged sand bars make this a class I Recreation resource (according to the Ontario Land Inventory).

It is safe for swimming along its whole length except at the Point where river currents create dangerous undertows. It is only this one small section, too, which is unstable, subject to changes in shape from the river currents. The remainder of the ten miles is a stable active beach.

By nature, the beach does not have much vegetation. This has been reinforced by past use and development, and now very few natural undisturbed plant communities exist along the beach.

However, the beach is stable and can stand a high degree of use, so long as groynes, piers and other obstructions are not placed in the water to interrupt the normal, natural beach building processes.

The water of Nottawasaga Bay is generally clean, clear and generally pollution free. Regular summer samples identify occasional high pollution counts from drainage ditches emptying on the beach, presumably overflow from faulty septic systems. The water table of this area is high, making it generally unsuitable for septic systems. The new sewer system will accommodate the sewage from private, Park and commercial areas along this section, alleviating this problem.



## 2 The Raised Beaches

The raised beaches are composed of fine, sorted beach sands layed over gravel (the original baymouth bar). The high water table is maintained by the height of the river or Georgian Bay and by normal water recharge. The swales or troughs often have standing water in them, while the ridges are well drained sands. This gives rise to a striking pattern of vegetation with the dry ridges supporting white birch, red maple and cedar bush, while the swales support white birch - balsam bush, red ash - white birch - tamarack bush or wet shrub thickets, as well as high numbers of orchid species.

The plant cover is dense, because of the availability of water, and insect populations are high. It is, therefore, generally unpleasant for people, although insect eating birds (warblers, vireos, flycatchers) are numerous, especially in migration.

The area has no septic suitability because of the high water tables. Further, if artificial draining took place, the effect on the biological communities would be extreme.

The wetland species are totally dependent on a good supply of readily available water.

Some of the older (higher) beach ridges have small embryonic dunes on them composed, no doubt, of sand blown from beaches created later with the dropping levels of Glacial Lake Nipissing to present levels.

Of the five raised beach sections, 2d., the Powerline Unit, is the largest and least disturbed, and therefore, most representative both geomorphologically and biologically.



Foredunes

## 3 The Foredunes

The foredunes are found in one long continuous section behind the raised beaches. They are composed of wind sorted sands blown from the active beaches. They are low (10 to 20 feet) randomly located hills which will blow out easily if their vegetative cover is removed. It is probable that sands first collected into this foredune area before being even further wind sorted and blown to make the parabolic dunes.

These foredunes contain the most significant species and communities in the whole of Wasaga Beach area. The vegetation, dry land species, ranges from open true prairie to prairie heath to red oak - white pine savannah, to red oak - red pine - white pine forest in both open and closed phases. The vegetative cover is thin, clinging tenuously to the dry sands. Studies in 1973 have shown that even light use, will break the vegetative cover exposing the bare sands to the wind. Continued use prohibits the vegetation from closing back in over bare areas.

It is presumed that many of the prairie areas have been maintained by fire, both natural and man caused, and that further fire will be necessary to keep it from evolving naturally to savannah and ultimately closed forest.

In the spring, fall and winter the dunes are very attractive and pleasant, but in the summer, soil temperatures of up to 130°F have been recorded; this and hot still air make the dunes generally unpleasant areas in which to walk.

The Central Section, 3b., contains most of the true prairie, as well as prairie heath, and open and closed phases of red oak, white pine and red pine forest. Of the three foredune units, it is biologically most significant.

## 4 Parabolic Dunes

Parabolic dunes are uncommon in Ontario. The size, extent, and degree of preservation of this set of parabolic dunes renders them of provincial significance. These dunes are made up of wind sorted sands, as are the foredunes. They are oriented north-west to south east (in the direction of the prevailing winds). The best developed dunes occur in the centre of the belt tapering off in size and in uniformity of shape towards their eastern and western ends.

Most of the area is covered with red pine, white pine, or red pine - white pine - red oak forest in open and closed phases. There are also some areas of true prairie and prairie heath. As in the foredunes, the more open areas are very hot and uncomfortable in the summer, and the closed forest areas, although with less extreme ground temperatures, are also less windy, again becoming uncomfortable on hot days.

Steep slopes are common in the parabolic dunes, the unstable sands being held in place by fragile ground vegetation. Where the vegetation is disturbed, blowouts readily occur; many are found in these parabolic dunes.

The Central Section, 4b., exhibits the best developed and largest parabolic dunes of the system, and is therefore the most significant of the three parabolic dunes sections. The East Section is less disturbed but the dunes are smaller and are not so obviously parabolic.

The West Section, 4a., is similar in size to 4b but is less characteristic and more disturbed by man.

### 5 Lagoon Sediments

At the time the beach ridges were being formed and the sand was blowing and creating the dunes there was a large lagoon south of the baymouth bar. Today Marl Lake and Jack Lake are remnants of the lagoon but there is a much larger area of clay-silt, marly soils extending beyond the Park and Town boundaries. Much of this land has been cleared for agriculture. As it is generally varved clay and silt loam with a high content of marl, drainage is poor.

### 6 Nottawasaga River Shoreline

The Nottawasaga River has breached the geological system throughout the Dunes area. It meanders sluggishly through the lagoon sediments leaving a wide band of "hazard land" subject to spring flooding.

It cuts sharply through the western unit of High Dunes exposing steep bluffs. The small "alluvial flats" provide a narrow shoreline for fishermen when the waters are low. The River rushes through its oxbow area precariously weaving between the foredunes then turning sharply at the Schoonertown link and flowing parallel to the Bay and the Beach until it empties into Nottawasaga Bay four miles past Schoonertown.

The dogwood - willow - grape shrub thickets and red oak - silver maple - red maple floodplain forests protect the shoreline of the River and maintain the banks from further erosion.

### 7 Sandplain

Bordering the western unit of the High Dunes is an area of blown sand over lagoon sediment. The forest cover is red pine - white pine - red oak in closed phase with red maple - red oak - white birch low dune hardwood forest. Slopes are fairly shallow and the water table is low. A hydro powerline crosses this unit.

### 8 Geological Section

An eroded section on the west side of the river exposes a geological cross-section which is best viewed from the River or the opposite bank within the Dune area. Elements of lagoon sediments, beach sediments, and blown dune sands are clearly visible in the cross-section.



Nottawasaga River

9 Park Links  
9a. Schoonertown Link

This unit is important because of its strategic location. The Nottawasaga River eroded into the beach ridges and exposed a bluff and then turned sharply to parallel the ridges for almost four miles before emptying into the Bay. There are evidences of Archaic and Saugeen Indian use of this particular site, probably a fishing encampment. There are Ojibwa artifacts from a much later period and evidences of the naval garrison erected at the site in 1814-15. Presently, the new Schoonertown Bridge will occupy this site providing a vital link between the Beach and south side of the River. Traffic between Collingwood and Midland (or Highway 92) will be able to bypass the main stream of congestion at Highway 92 and Mosely Street.

9b. Powerline Link

This unit consists of a point bar formed of sediment sand within the Nottawasaga River.

This low lying sand island, covered with substantial layer of grasses and a few shrubs and willows, is again primarily important for its strategic location.

The island lies opposite Powerline Road and is presently joined to the mainland south side of the River by an old one-lane car bridge and a small footbridge. There are docking facilities on the south side of the island. Susceptibility to flooding is high and development potential is minimal.

9c. Nancy Island Link

Presently Nancy Island houses the Museum of the Upper Great Lakes.

The island is purportedly formed by sands which built up over the sunken hull of the Nancy. The island is landscaped and joined to the north side of the River by a footbridge.



Nancy Island – Hull remnants of 'Nancy'

## 4.4 Development Potential

Fragility of ground cover or soils, steepness of slopes, significance of resource or possibility of flooding are some of the factors which may limit development of an area, or the degree or intensity of use which may be made of it.

The Management Units have been ranked as to their suitability for development, according to the following scale, and are charted in Section 4.2 and on figure 13.

1. Not suitable for any degree of development because of fragility, or significance, or both.
2. Light Development and as trails and related facilities. No roads or intensive uses.
3. Physically capable of medium to intensive development.
4. Medium to intensive development permissible. Areas which have been previously altered or have least relative value in dunes system.



**Management Units  
and Development Potential**

Wascana Beach Provincial Park



# 5. The Park Plan

## 5.1 Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Goal

*To provide for the people of Ontario, and the community of Wasaga Beach, a wide range of year round recreational, interpretive, educational and scientific opportunities associated with recreation and natural resources of provincial significance, while contributing towards the economy of the recreation community.*



## 5.2 Objectives for the Park

1. *To maintain and further develop the beach for traditional beach day use (swimming and sun bathing) for the people of Southern Ontario.*

All of the beach front below highwater level, along the town of Wasaga Beach and six areas extending south of the beach front (a total of 350 acres) has been identified as the Beach Area of the park. Cars, once crowding the beach, and driving up and down its length have been removed. The beach is meant to accommodate people not vehicles. Parking is being provided in the park extensions. This will accommodate most normal use, but peak weekends in the summer will flood our parking facilities. Off-beach parking areas are being considered to accommodate this "peak day" parking. These will be especially successful if town transit systems are developed in the future. The beach area extensions will also hold basic beach use facilities such as garbage, washroom and change house facilities, and scattered picnicking areas.

2. *To create a wider variety of beach front oriented uses for day visitors, tourists, cottagers and residents.*

The ten miles of beach is not a homogeneous unit. Some portions are near a commercial core, others surrounded by permanent dwellings or cottages, family groups or senior citizens. Each section of beach will be developed according to its adjacent community function, and its present and potential users. Creative playgrounds will exist to serve family cottagers as well as family day users. Youths may meet in a special forum. Quiet areas for sitting and viewing, open areas for field sports, tennis, shuffleboard, lawn bowling and volley ball all may occur, in conjunction with different beach areas.

3. *To provide the opportunity for extensive and space requiring recreation activities, in the "Dunes Area", in recognition of the natural significance and fragility of the area.*

Opportunities for hiking, nature study, cross-country skiing or other extensive and space requiring uses are limited in the beach area of the park, because of the small size of the individual park areas along the beach, and the existing and potential density of people and facilities in these areas. The Dunes area of the park, however, offers opportunity for such activities, with its larger spaces, lack of existing development, pleasant atmosphere and natural significance.



4. *To preserve a portion of a provincially significant natural system.*

Resource evaluation has identified that the Wasaga Beach geomorphological system and its biological components, are provincially significant. They are also very fragile. A representative section will be identified and protected as a Natural Zone in the Dunes area of the Park.

5. *To interpret to the public (all four categories) the various resources of and stories of Wasaga Beach, especially as they are illustrated within the park areas.*

Wasaga Beach has a varied and interesting history, and a significant natural history. Opportunities will be made available for anyone who is interested to learn about the stories of Wasaga Beach and to explore them to whatever level of detail he desires.

6. *To provide opportunities for education groups at all levels to utilize the natural resources of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park for learning experiences.*

Schools are involved in out-of-class education at three levels. Some are offering opportunities for physical expansion (recreation skills); some are involved in general environmental education; and some are going out of the classroom to explore resources that relate to specific topics on their curriculum (history, geology, biology etc.). Wasaga offers opportunity for all three aspects of out-of-class education, for groups from kindergarten through university. The Park will provide facilities to encourage these uses.

7. *To provide opportunities for further scientific research of the natural system of the Wasaga Beach area.*

There is still much to know about the Wasaga Beach area and its resources. Both undergraduate and post graduate (university) students have carried out studies in the past at Wasaga Beach, on the dunes, biology, community development, and so on, that have added new knowledge and have given answers on resource management. Such research will be encouraged to continue.

8. *To attract tourists and day visitors to the Wasaga Beach community, help sustain their interest possibly prolonging their visit, or encouraging their return.*

The variety of facilities and services available in the Beach and Dune Areas of the park will help attract day visitors and tourists, and encourage them to stay. Programmed activities (playgrounds, group sports, etc.) and special events sponsored by the park should also add to the attractiveness of the recreation community.

9. *To expand the seasons of use of the Wasaga Beach community changing the "peak weekends in summer" to a year round recreation community.*

Park facilities will be developed for year round use. Activities and special events will be designed to encourage use other than in the summer months. Such activities as "fall colour trips" cross-country ski meets, fishing derbies, canoe races and so on, run by the park, or with the town, will help draw tourists and day visitors to Wasaga throughout the year.



## 5.3 Development Philosophy

The concept of "Recreation Community" is one which will take time to formulate and understand and it will certainly be the first such undertaking in Ontario. The significance of this fact is considerable, as the entire proposed park is within the boundaries of the newly formed Town of Wasaga Beach. The implications of this relationship go beyond concern for the amount of land being diverted to park use, for the park and community are being planned as mutually supporting parts of a provincially important tourism and recreation resource.

Successful creation and development of a viable Recreation Community as called for in *Wasaga Park Community Project: Progress Report 1971*, requires a special relationship between park and community. This can only occur through the recognition of the unique potential of the area and through the acceptance of the responsibility of the concerned agencies to exercise co-operation in implementing responsible development.

The Provincial Park at Wasaga Beach will, in essence, become a multi-faceted park which should be a catalyst to community development. This suggests that its importance in providing facilities for traditional summer weekend use might become secondary to its ultimate year round use.

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park will be unlike other provincial parks in the sense that it is essentially two distinct parks being planned under one name. The administrative, operational and policy aspects of this situation increase significantly, although the amount and the diversity of recreational possibilities increases in direct proportion as well. The major park areas are distinctly different in character and potential and are physically separated from one another. This is beneficial in the sense that different uses will be more easily appreciated. The two park areas comprising eight sections are referred to as the Beach Area and the Dunes Area.

The Beach Area will be designed to handle Wasaga's traditional, intensive recreational pursuits, and will complement the neighbouring residential and commercial aspects of the community by providing suitably oriented recreation facilities. In another way, the Beach Area is a further complication in terms of ideal planning practices in that the park has existed here for years and is growing and continually building. This plan will show past planning and construction incorporated with new and proposed facilities.

The Dunes Area will be designed to provide for extensive and space-requiring recreational uses while providing considerable protection for the natural environment. The Ministry of Natural Resources has identified "The Dunes" as an extremely fragile and significant area. These facts must be strongly considered and evaluated to avoid careless planning which might result in widespread destruction of the landscape.

In addition to these two major park sections it will be necessary to provide physical links across the river to enhance the accessibility and continuity of the whole park. The importance and function of these links will be more carefully weighed as more detailed planning is undertaken.

## 5.4 Park Identity

An integral and essential aspect of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park will be to implement a comprehensive identity programme to identify and provide continuity to the eight sections of the park.

This programme will entail a co-ordinated architectural theme for all new park buildings and for renovated and improved existing buildings. Graphic applications on buildings, outdoor interpretive media systems and a complete, comprehensive signage network for all park sections are essential elements to be incorporated.

A programme of this nature is of paramount importance because of the complexity of the park itself and its rather unique location and environment. The identification system must satisfy two dissimilar park areas which will be designed and intended for very unlike uses. At the same time the park and its sub-units should relate as strongly as possible in character and identity to the local community. A future consideration may be to integrate signage and graphic systems to firmly establish the Recreation Community concept.

### Park Logo and Signage

The removal of cars from the beach, changing land uses, development and the complex nature of the Provincial Park at Wasaga Beach has led to the establishment of visual identity systems to locate and co-relate park units. A logo was designed for the park in 1973 and has since been applied in blue colours to signs on the beach and incorporated into supergraphics on buildings as a test system in the province. This system will be expanded in the future to incorporate the Dunes Area (in brown shades), improved sign structures and all internal signs (possibly utilizing symbols).

### Architecture and Graphics

It is not possible, at this time, to suggest that there is a theme for the architecture in Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. The park buildings are a melange of Lands and Forests architecture, renovated beach structures and assorted new buildings. Within practical limits, structures to be built or renovated in the future will be reviewed for possible conformity to an architectural identity programme. Architecture for the Dunes Area will be entirely new and should be suitable for the immediate environment.

In the Beach Areas, supergraphics are being tested on some buildings. This programme is intended to generate some relief for large and institutional buildings, to enhance interpretive programmes and reflect the intensive recreation aspect of the community.



comfort station graphics



## Logo

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park

The logo shown above and as coloured on the cover of this report will be used to identify Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. The park itself and its beach units will be identified with blue colours, while brown tones will differentiate the Dunes Area.

In the symbol, the white bands represent familiar aspects of Wasaga Beach: gulls, waves, and sand dunes. Blue and brown colours represent skies, water and land.

## 5.5 Park Zoning

Resource identification and evaluation has shown, by management units, what level of development is possible in the Park Areas at Wasaga Beach. For purposes of determining Park concepts, the Park has been zoned into three categories. (Figure 14)

1. **Natural Zone.** This is an area of high natural significance and fragility. Development will be limited to trails for interpretive, educational and scientific purposes.
2. **Hinterland Zone.** These areas, generally fragile, allow light development such as recreation and interpretive trails. Landscape modifications will be kept to a minimum.
3. **Development Zone.** Either because the land is capable, or because natural values have been discounted from past use or future need, these areas will contain those uses and developments that require major landscape modification, or contribute very heavy pressures.





# 6. Development Concepts

## 6.1 Beach Areas

A basic principle underlying development of the Beach Area is to provide maximum year-round recreational opportunities for the visitors and permanent and seasonal residents of Wasaga Beach with minimum compromise to the community and the land.

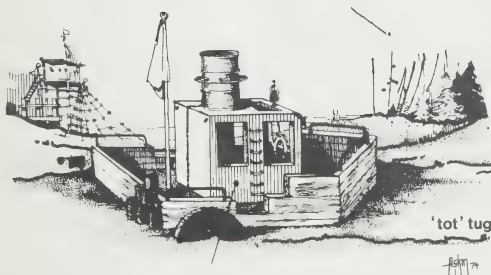
This objective is large and complex, requiring a long time to fulfill developing the character of the beach areas as the recreation community develops. The beach will provide basic conveniences found in most day use parks in the province as well as a series of features oriented to vacationers in the area who become short term visitors to the park. Many features in the Beach Area will be unique to Wasaga Beach. These will be designed to be used to greater advantage by the adjacent community than by visitors.

The individual beach units will be developed to be compatible with their immediate environs, but all will reflect similar standards of landscaping, space allocation and basic facilities. The Beach Area will be differentiated from the Dunes Area by subtle adjustments in the signage/identity programme.

The Beach Area is comprised of approximately 350 acres (above high water line), in 7 designated development areas. Six of these units are linked by fine, sandy beaches and the shallow Nottawasaga Bay waters for seven miles. The seventh area, Flos Beach, is three miles long and similar in potential character but is separated from the remainder of the Beach Areas by the mouth of the Nottawasaga River.

It is the province's intention that these park areas, apart from providing space for the residents of Ontario, become local parks for residents, that cooperation and the realization of mutual objectives lead to the park's use as an integral part of the community.

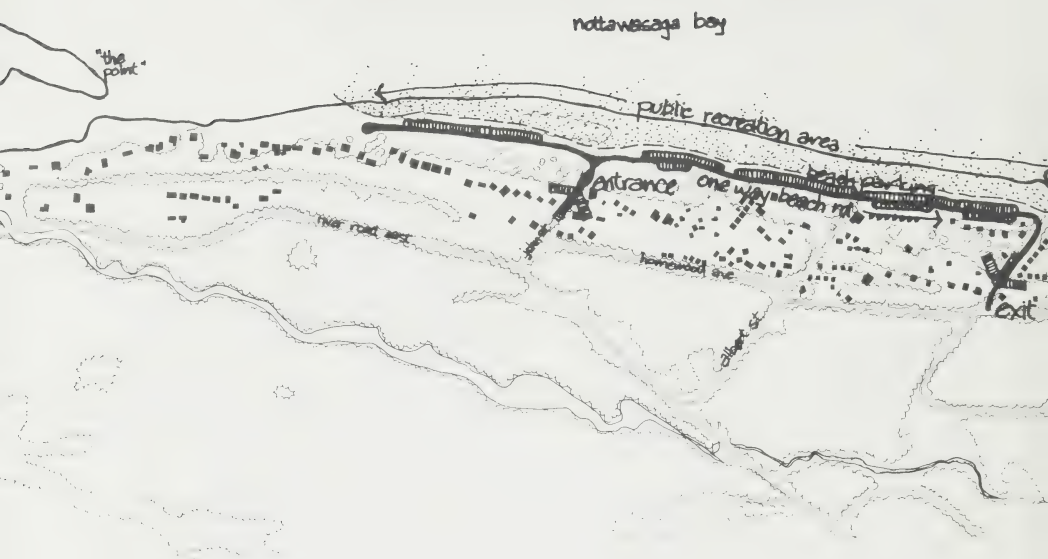
The Beach Areas, and in some ways the Dunes can become centres in which community events are staged or into which they may overflow. A coordinated approach to carnivals, multi-cultural festivals and a wide range of local events should be considered as possibilities within Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. Improved road systems, bike and pedestrian paths, year round facilities and possible mass transit systems are a few concrete ways in which the "Recreation Community" can benefit in the future.



## Development Zones

### Flos Beach

Development on Flos Beach will be limited to the provision of well set-back sanitary facilities. On-beach parking will be in defined areas and access to private cottages will be permitted, but through traffic will be reduced. Private enterprise and family-oriented bathing and boating activities will be encouraged. (Figure 15)



river rd. east  
or laura rd.

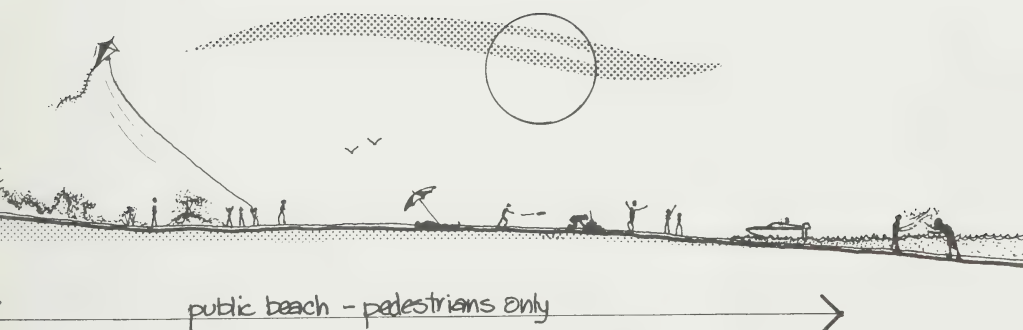
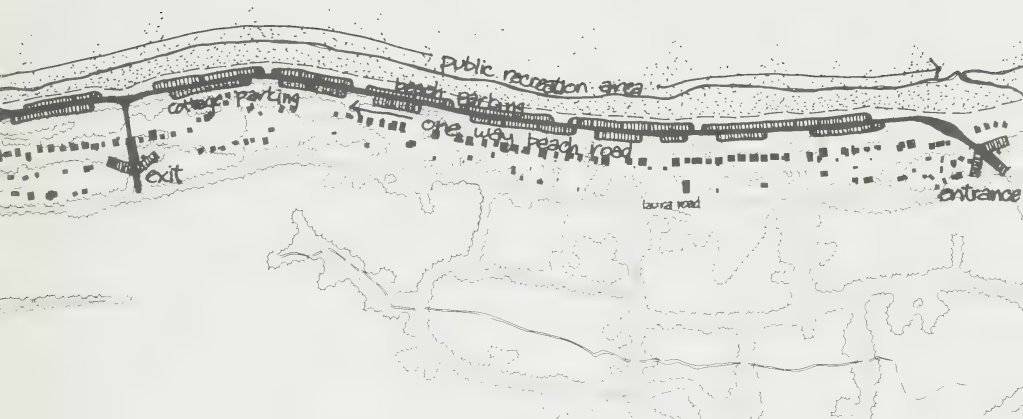
private cottages

cottage parking	beach road	beach parking
--------------------	---------------	------------------

extent of vehicles  
on beach →



nottawasage bay



## Flos Beach Development Concept

plan scale



## Beach Areas 1-2

All Beach Area units will be intensively developed recreation areas although the orientations and specific character of the units may vary. Beach Areas 1 & 2 will provide facilities which represent concentrated attention to the day-users and tourists who find the Main Street Mall/Amusement area the most attractive. These sections will accommodate large numbers of cars and people, and picnic and play areas will be numerous. The linear aspect of the beach between 12th St. and "the Point" will be highlighted by a boardwalk which will be designed to facilitate pedestrian movement and access to new and existing features along its length. Other feature activities related to these park sections will include river-oriented recreation, boat launching, new concessions and interpretive areas. Access to Nancy Island, near Beach Area 2 will be improved. (Figures 16 & 17)

## Beach Area 6

All maps in this Preliminary Master Plan show the boundaries of Beach Area 6 as they were in mid 1974 at the time of this writing. The boundaries shown include the most land to be considered for this area. They are not final lines, as negotiations are currently underway with Council and Planning Board of the Town of Wasaga Beach to place limits on park size and to formulate terms of agreement for long range land uses in the Springhurst - Oakview Beach areas.

Development plans for the area tend towards designating Beach Area 6 as an important western terminus of the park with numerous provisions for family groups of day visitors and cottagers. Special efforts will be made to improve access to the beaches and to coordinate programmes and facilities in the immediate vicinity of the Oakview Community Centre. Most other basic park facilities will be developed but the type and size of parking and picnicking areas will be seriously considered. (Figure 21)

## Beach Areas 3-4-5

These Beach areas will likewise be intensively developed for recreation, but their orientation will be more towards the long term visitor. This would include permanent and seasonal residents, cottage renters and families camping in the vicinity.

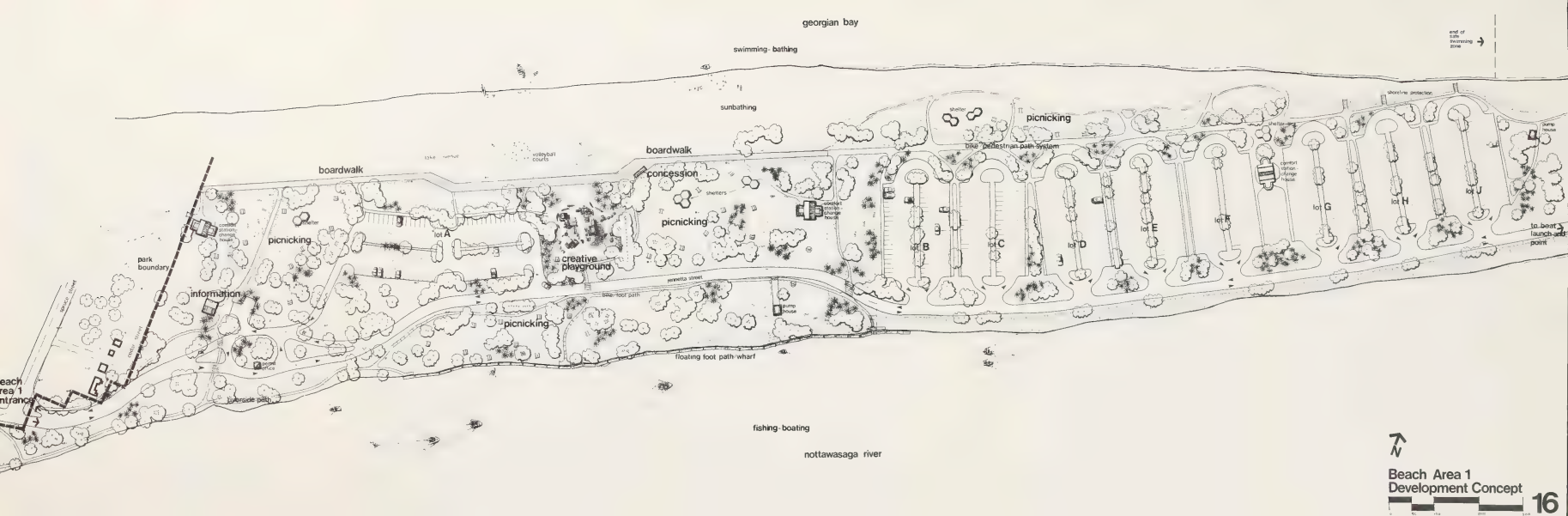
Beach areas 3,4 and 5 will be designed to attract family groups, and as much as possible, people on foot or on bicycles. Play areas will be for all age groups, but special attention will be paid to children and senior citizens. Interpretive media and recreation programmes will encourage repeat visitation and in some instances park facilities developed for all types of day visitors will have additional extended use by the community during summer evenings and in the off-season. (Figures 18, 19, 20)

## Other Beach Properties

Property acquisition, which began before this plan under earlier direction, has resulted in Crown ownership of a number of parcels of land (mainly cottage lots) outside of current boundary proposals. Such properties on the beach front will be used to provide services, facilities and public access to the beach. The large area between Beach Areas 2 and 3 has potential for more intensive facilities such as basketball and tennis courts, which can become outdoor rinks in the winter. Such facilities would be used by towns people as well as visitors, and in fact would probably develop the characteristics of a small community park.

### Cross-section Beach Area 1



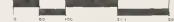




Area to East of extended brown line is open to possible re-zoning and change of use to commercial by agreement Spring 1974



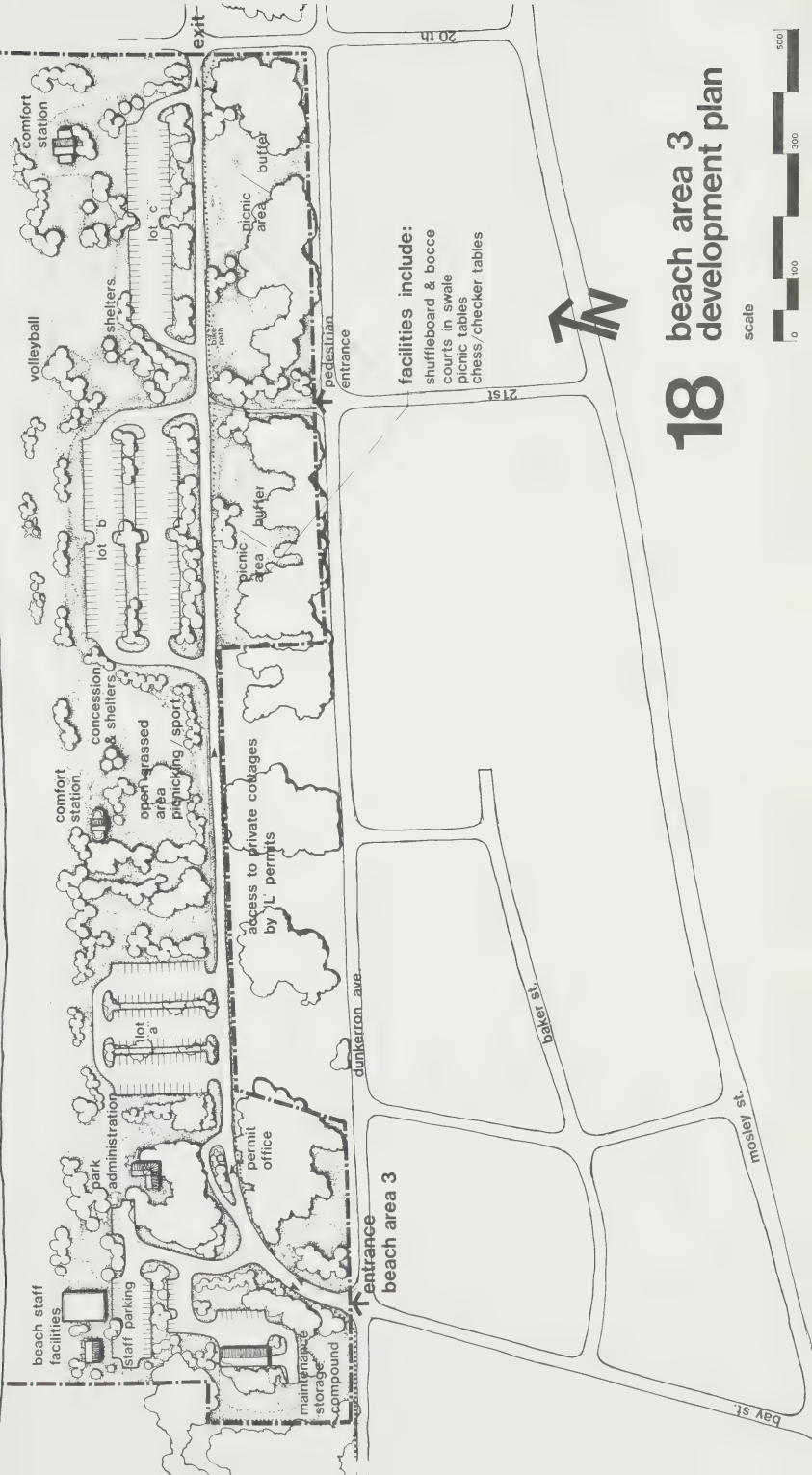
Beach Area 2  
Development Concept

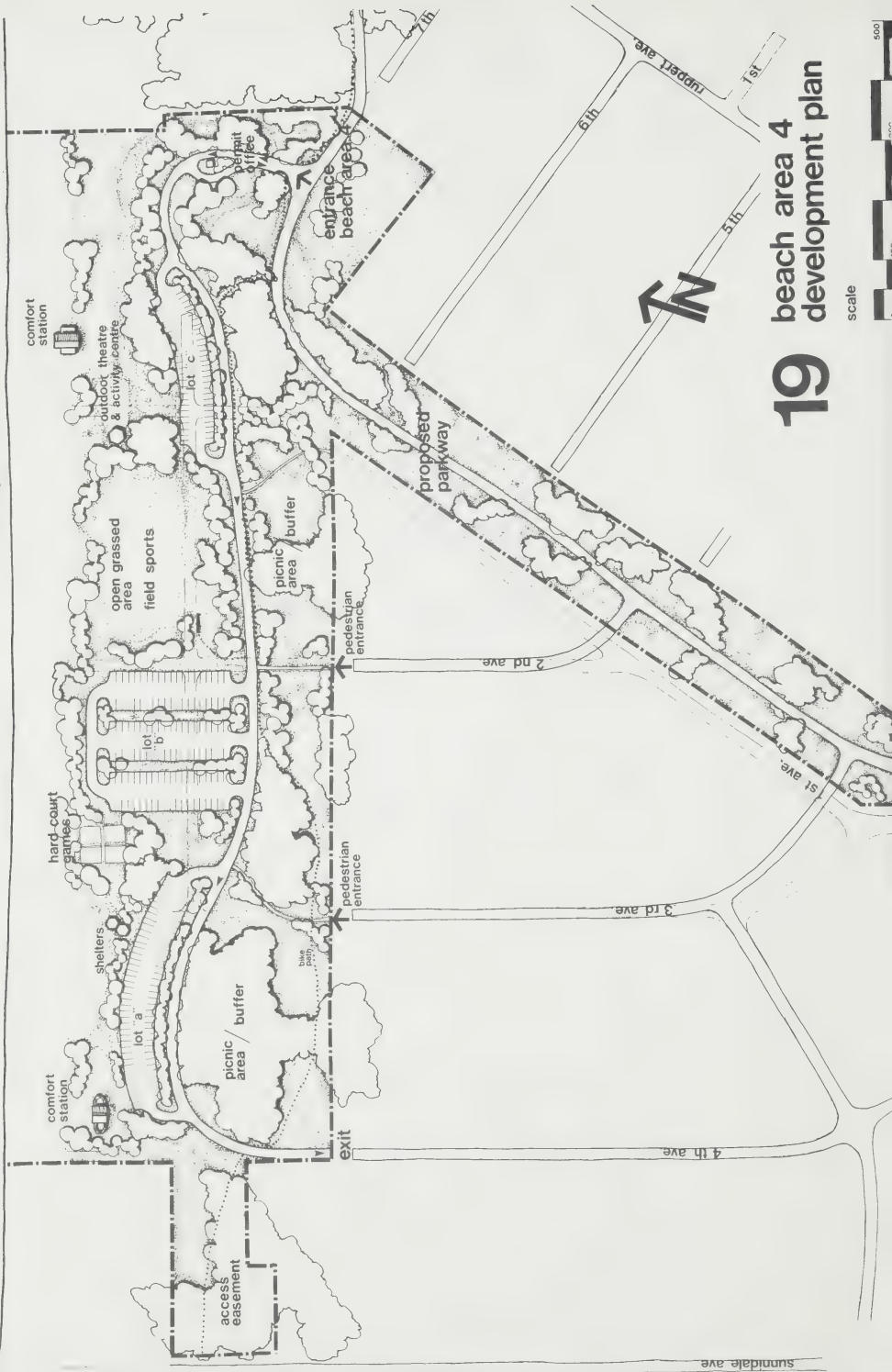






nottawasaga bay





# 19 beach area 4 development plan

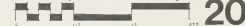
scale



playground sketches

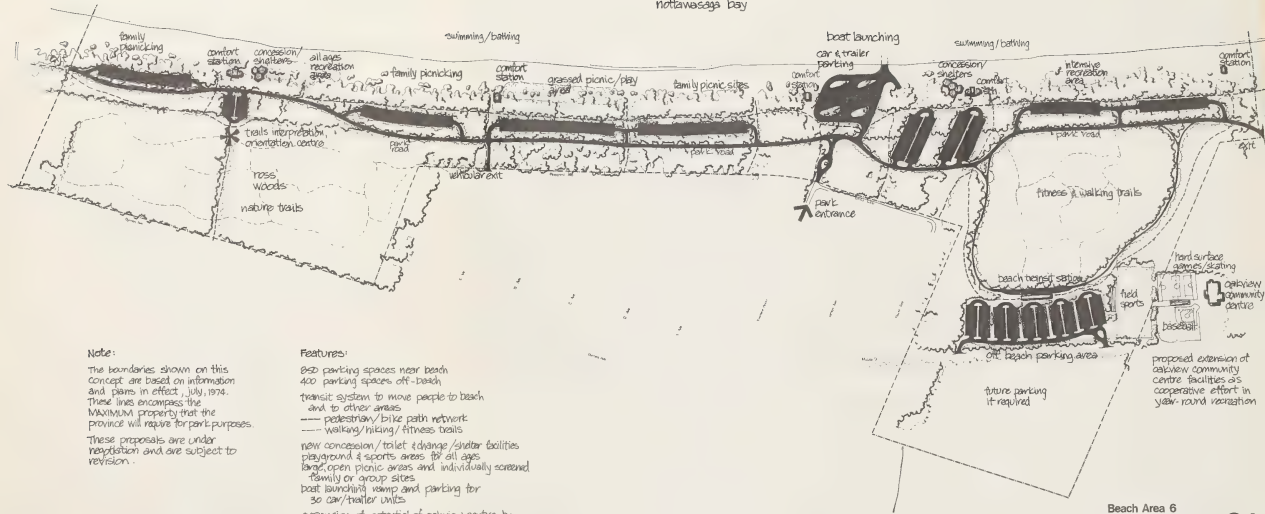


Beach Area 5  
Development Concept





# notawasaga bay



## Note:

The boundaries shown on this concept are based on information and plans in effect, July, 1974. These lines encompass the MAXIMUM property that the province will require for park purposes.

These proposals are under negotiation and are subject to revision.

## Features:

- 850 parking spaces near beach
- 400 parking spaces off-beach
- transit system to move people to beach and to other areas
- pedestrian/bike path network
- walking/hiking/fitness trails
- new concession/toilet/change/shower facilities
- playground & sports areas for all ages
- large, open picnic areas and individually screened family or group sites
- boat launching ramp and parking for 30 car/trailer units
- expansion of potential of oakview centre by provision of recreation facilities within provincial park





Nottawasaga Bay

Beach Areas



#### FEATURES:

- Potential Campground in Primary Development Zone 100-700 sites (built in stages)
- Potential for 15-25 miles of snowmobile trails
- Fishing/Picnicking/Canoeing
- Outdoor education
- Trails for numerous uses

## Dunes Area Generalized Development Concept



## 6.2 Dunes Area

Zoning has identified where potential for heavy development lies in the Dunes Area, but heavy development here implies much less impact with fewer numbers of people than in the Beach Area. Large portions of the Dunes Area are also identified as having little or no development potential. It is obvious that recreation uses of the Dunes Area are of a much more extensive nature than in the Beach Area. Possible activities include camping, and a variety of trail uses such as hiking, cycling, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. River use, fishing and canoeing, will be encouraged with facilities and events. Educational and interpretive programmes have excellent possibilities in the Dunes Area, which is also the focus for scientific studies. (Figure 22)

A general philosophy of Dunes Area development will focus on the preservation of the visual landscape of the whole area with design and landscaping carried out to re-create what is altered in the development of intensive use areas.

To this end, motorcycles, trail bikes, dune buggies, and other all-terrain-vehicles will be restricted from the Dunes Area on a year round basis, unless, of course, they are duly licensed and operating on a public road with a licensed operator. Snowmobiles may be the exception to this restriction, but would be limited to operation on specified trails within the Dunes Area, with a further restriction of a minimum snow depth. Scars made by the unrestricted use of such vehicles could result in major visible damage and eventual sand movements.

### Dunes Area Zoning and Development (Figures 14,22)

#### The Natural Zone

This zone includes a representative cross-section of the geomorphological system at Wasaga Beach, and also includes some of the more significant of the biological communities. It will be used primarily for scientific research, education and interpretive purposes, with use restricted to designated trails. Such trails may need relocation at regular intervals to avoid a destructive impact on the ground cover. Methods of trail surfacing will be investigated as alternatives to relocation.

Biologists suggest that fire may have been instrumental in maintaining the wide variety of plant communities. Research is currently being carried out to support or disprove this theory. If it is correct, then fire will be used as a management tool in this zone to maintain elements of prairie, prairie heath, and savannah.

#### The East Hinterland Zone

Trails will be the main feature of this zone. Hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing will be emphasized. A loop of snowmobile trail may border south, east and north of the zone.

Interpretation is also a function of the Zone with many of the trails serving this end as well as a recreational one.

Special events, especially trails-related, could take place here. Bird walks, botanical trips, educational trips or even international cross-country ski meets are possibilities.

Trail orientation (warming, waxing and changing shelters in the winter) could be located at either the north (Nancy Island) or South (Sage farm) end of this Zone, depending on access and parking facilities.

For the non-energetic, in-capable or the person in a hurry, a loop transit system (tractor train) could be located in this Zone, although such location would require extreme care and caution to avoid potential damage to fragile slopes. Such a system could double transit from an off-beach parking area with an interpretive site-seeing trip through representative geomorphological and biological sections. The road bed required for this system could also be used as a bicycle trail through this interesting area.

Because of its fragility, significance and character, major development features would be restricted from this Zone.

#### West Hinterland Zone

Fragile and significant, this zone lies between two Development Zones. It has capability for trails, but will need to provide some more intensive facilities, especially road sections. All such development, however, will be carefully designed to minimize visual impact or potential landscape changes. It may also need to provide for some snowmobile trails linking the development Zones. These too will be carefully designed and located.

Walking and hiking trails, and interpretation highlights will be developed in this Zone.

#### The River Hinterland Zone

River access for fishing, trails and interpretive features will constitute the development of this zone.

### The Foredunes Development Zone

Portions of this Zone have been subjected in the past to severe modifications, others are still relatively undisturbed. Generally fragile, it will require a great deal of landscaping with development.

This Zone will contain the central sewage system for the Town of Wasaga Beach, which will require about fifty acres on the river's edge. It will also contain portions of the Dunes Area road system with the appropriate entrance facilities. A Visitor Centre concentrating on interpretation of the natural systems of Wasaga Beach and offering out-of-class educational facilities will be built in the eastern part of this zone.

Trails may originate here with orientation facilities and a snowmobile take-off point is possible. Parking areas for this type of facility could double in the summer as off-beach parking.

Dune Area administrative facilities would probably be in this zone associated with the Visitor Centre.

### The South Development Zone

Public camping, camping for special groups (educational, institutional), interpretive facilities, park entry facilities, river access, snowmobile trails and a major snowmobile activity centre (meeting, warming, changing building) could all be located in this Zone. If transit systems develop (park or public) off-beach parking could also be located here.

## 6.3 Park Links

The Park links (or bridges), will be those physical features which provide access between the Beach Area and the Dunes Area across the Nottawasaga River. One bridge is in existence, one will be constructed and two are proposed. The existing bridge at Main Street is currently the only available means of crossing the river. The Schoonertown Bridge, when completed will offer a much needed western crossing point and will carry most of the through traffic away from the congested town areas. Both bridges will accommodate cars and pedestrians and would play a vital role when and if a park transit system was developed. In addition to these bridges, two additional pedestrian links are proposed.

The first proposed pedestrian bridge would be located in the central part of town, linking the central Dunes Area from the Powerline Road area to the Joan-Bay streets Commercial Area. This facility would be designed to encourage increased use of the Dunes Area in one direction, and more pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the beach and shopping areas in the other.

The second proposed pedestrian link would span the Nottawasaga River south from Nancy Island. It should attract people away from their cars and away from the Main Street Bridge. This link would promote visitation to the Historic site by providing easier access and more parking on the south side of the river for the museum and for beach use. It should also encourage increased visitation to the Dunes Area. This proposal requires more study on its effect on river traffic and on the use of Nancy Island and will probably not be developed in the immediate future.

In all cases, the park links are seen as integral keys to the successful development of the two areas of the park and should enhance the character of the community.

## 6.4 Visitor Services

While the name "Visitor Services" may be vague, in this context it applies to the Provincial Park communications and recreation programmes. As such it includes these basic elements:

- Information
- Interpretation
- Out-of class education
- Recreation Programming

### Information

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park will be a complex area, with its pieces spread along ten miles of beach and across a river in three links to a large dune area. Different characteristics, varying facilities and services are located in different areas. A visitor can be easily confused.

In order to ensure that visitors and residents understand what the park has to offer, a concentrated information programme will be required. Brochures and maps will explain locations, activities, use requirements, and opportunities to all who need such information. Special features and activities will be identified to help the visitor understand the operation of the park, its functions and opportunities. Such information will be distributed through commercial and government outlets, in park areas, and through the media of radio, television and newspaper.

The Park information programme can also deal with joint park - town programmes, and town programmes of a recreational nature.

## Interpretation

The history and natural history of Wasaga Beach are interesting and important to an understanding of the region and how it developed. These aspects will be interpreted in the park to those people who are interested. Such interpretive programmes, as illustrated by Algonquin, Pinery, Rondeau, Presqu'île and other provincial parks are usually popular and important park attractions.

Wasaga Beach has several themes for interpretation.

The historic themes are:

- : prehistory
- : Military history
- : resource utilization
- : evolution of a resort community

The natural history themes are: the development of a major geomorphological system

- : the biology of the area

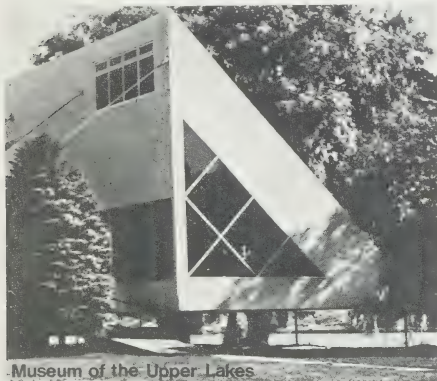
Other themes include :

- : the management of a recreation resource
- : the management of a natural resource

The intention of interpretation is not to place items and artifacts in a museum for people to see, and then forget, but to encourage visitors to explore the resources on site.

To this end, the park will have a major orientation centre, concentrating on historical, cultural and natural themes, which will identify the stories of Wasaga Beach and will direct the visitor to individual sites, features and activities related to these stories and themes.

Nancy Island, The Museum of the Upper Great Lakes, will remain a Historic Site, concentrating on the Military history of the Wasaga Beach area, but it will be managed by the Provincial Park. The role of this facility will be reviewed on a regular basis as the master plan will.



Museum of the Upper Lakes

## Out-of-Class Education

There are three aspects to out-of-class education, namely:

- physical recreation skills (learning to snowshoe, camping etc.)
- general environmental awareness
- and specific curriculum-related studies

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park, in the dunes area can accommodate all three. The park will provide facilities and opportunities for educational groups of all levels from primary classes through university to develop skills or study the resources of the park. Facilities will be first available to the students of the Wasaga Beach area, second to the County of Simcoe, and next, other school boards and educational groups. Continuing co-operation with university sponsored research and thesis programmes will help contribute new knowledge of the area.

The out-of-class education facility will be included with the dunes orientation centre, and will provide, basically, space for indoor class work and meetings, a library, collections and information, laboratories and basic orientation (shared with the public orientation function).

This will not be a boarding school, but group camping locations will be available for out-of-class education groups. It would be desirable that the commercial community of Wasaga Beach develop accommodation for such groups, perhaps by supplying special group rate structures for overnight accommodation.

## Recreation Programming

As suggested in the introduction to this plan the Wasaga Beach community is virtually economically dependent upon recreation and the whims and interests of the people who choose to come here to satisfy their recreational requirements. In the past, for the large part, the ways in which people resolved their needs was fairly simple. But high waters, years of little snowfall, an inflating economy and greater demands for leisure time are but a few factors which have drastically altered the recreational way of life of the people of Ontario.

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park, as an integral part of the "Recreation Community," will have an important function in responding to the needs of the public by virtue of the services, open space and facilities available in the park areas.

Playgrounds and recreation areas, programmed activities and special events require the direction and coordination of qualified staff to be most effective and successful. For the first time, in 1974, Wasaga Beach Provincial Park had Recreation Programmers working in the Beach Areas on the provision and direction of a variety of recreation activities and events for all types of visitors. Although programmed recreation activities will occur or start in the park areas, the intention of the Visitor Services Programme is that these events spread into the community as much as possible. Park staff have and will work with the Recreation Board and staff of the Town of Wasaga Beach in combined and town sponsored programmes.

# 7. Planning Considerations



## 7.1 Circulation

### Off Beach Parking

According to the Progress Report 1971, 11000 parking spots will be needed on a peak weekend day. The Beach Areas will provide 5000 of these sites. Other areas, such as Beach Area #6 (south of Mosley Street) the Raised Beaches Unit near Nancy Island, the Race track area, and property next to the zoo, could provide another 1000 sites that are within a long walk of the beach. Further, Management Units 5a, 5b and 8 could accommodate at least another 4000 sites if they are developed for parking, but these would depend on a transit system to be successful.

The Town of Wasaga Beach and private enterprise will continue to provide parking spaces for other uses and the Town has begun posting and patrolling streets against random parking.

### Transit Systems

Some parts or all of the Beach Area will be served by a transit system that will disperse people along the beach as well as act as attractions in themselves. The Dunes Area also has potential for a loop transit circuit which could serve interpretive functions as well as dispersal, site seeing, and transportation from off-the-beach parking areas to the beach.

This Ministry would also encourage the Town to develop community transit systems, primarily during the peak summer season, to take some of the vehicular pressure from busy spots of the town and beach. At peak times during the summer, a transit system could run along River Road West, Klondike Park Road to Schoonertown to service community areas, the park and off beach park areas.

In addition to vehicular modes, a water-based, excursion type boat system could be put into service for cruises, interpretive tours and moving people across the river and along the length of the town.

### Bicycles

The Provincial Park at Wasaga is being designed to accommodate the bicycle as much as possible. In addition to bike routes and paths in park areas, connections to town streets and future sewer and water rights-of-way will be made. Links across the river will accommodate bicycle traffic and should encourage this means of access to the commercial areas, communities and the dunes.

Private enterprise should be able to provide bicycle rentals. If these do not develop on their own, then the Provincial Park may encourage such enterprise through bicycle rental concessions.

### East West Corridor

This Ministry feels that River Road West, improved and extended, would adequately serve traffic requirements for several years. When, however, an additional East-West corridor is deemed necessary, there are some environmental restrictions on its location in the Dunes Area. Such a road shall not cross through Units 2d, 3b, 4a, 4b, and 4c, all of which are highly significant and fragile Units of the Dunes Area.

In consultation with Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs and Ministry of Transportation and Communication, this Ministry suggests the following route for such a corridor: from Highway 92 to Westbury Road, West through unit 2e; through the proposed community, area and turning to the north sector of unit 2d, and then westward to join River Road West near the proposed Schoonertown Bridge. This road must swing north of the Dunes Area in the vicinity of unit 2d. It cannot cross this natural zone without serious destruction to the environment. (Refer also to Figure 3)

### Powerline Road

Of all the road improvements suggested by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Powerline Road is the lowest priority. The Ministry of Natural Resources considers the Powerline Road to be entirely unnecessary as a public road, since most people are adequately served by River Road West and/or future East West Corridor. The Eastern access road, Schoonertown Bridge and Sunnisdale Road will further improve local traffic conditions. Recent discussions with Ministry of Transportation and Communications support this view as they do not feel that the closure of Powerline Road will cause any serious traffic flow problems or cause hardships to people in changing traffic patterns. This Ministry recommends that the Powerline Road be closed to public travel, that a Park Road be developed along Powerline Road and across Unit 3a to Schoonertown. The north section of Powerline Road would be disconnected, and used as an easement for a major water line, a trail access route for bicycles, pedestrians, and possibly snowmachines. However, in keeping with the desires of Ministry of Transportation and Communications we would hold open the long range option of establishing Powerline Road as an access road from the new Highway 26 to the centre of Wasaga Beach, if traffic patterns and volume demands would justify this. (Refer also to Figure 3)



## 7.2 Activities

### Camping

Because of demand for other uses, and possible conflicts with other users, camping is not being suggested for any of the units of the Beach Area. However, there is a possibility of providing for camping in the Dunes Area. The most desirable area for camping would be Management Unit 7, and the west portion of #6, but all of Units 5 (a,b) are suitable for this development.

If camping is provided, site density could range from 2 to 3 sites per acre for less developed campgrounds to 5 sites per acre for more developed and serviced campgrounds. Numbers of campsites provided could range from 200 to 700. If the highest range (700) were chosen, development would start in Unit # 7, then Unit # 6 and Unit # 5a.

Summer camping would begin immediately, if sites were provided, but spring and fall camping may ultimately prove more popular, simply because summer temperatures are extreme in this area. Winter camping is a strong possibility for cross-country skiers, snowmobilers and for skiers at Collingwood.

### Snowmobiling

The Dunes Area now contains 17 miles of snowmobile trail, laid out by the Wasaga Beach Snowmobile Club. Much of this crosses areas not suitable for such trails because of steep slopes or vegetative fragility. There is a demand for snowmobiling, proven by present use, but there are also possible conflicts with other potential winter uses of the Dunes area, such as cross-country skiing and camping.

Regardless of other uses, though, snowmobiling cannot exist indiscriminately in the Dunes Area. The activity must be limited to marked, groomed trails. Some trail surfacing may be required in fragile areas, and trails will be limited to slopes of less than 9%, because of erosion potential. Snowmobiling would also be limited by a minimum snow cover of six inches.

If snowmobiling trails were developed in the Dune Areas that can accept development, on park roads and the Powerline, and as well, a perimeter route around the Dunes Area, a total of about 25 miles of trail could be provided. Elimination of the perimeter route and restriction to the west side of the park would result in about 15 miles of continuous trails.

There are three basic options for snowmobiling.

1. A snowmobile meeting and parking area for dispersal to private land trails arranged on easements by local snowmobile clubs (or the Huronia Snowmobile Association which has had a great deal of success in arranging such easements for snowmobiling on private lands)
2. About 15 miles of trail in the west end of the Dunes Area and on park roads, as well as 1.
3. About 25 miles of trail in the west end of the Dunes Area and on park roads and around the perimeter of the park, as well as 1.

All of these options include snowmobiling along the beach, as long as acceptable to the community.

The Wasaga Beach Snowmobile Club has been active to date in the marking and grooming of trails. This Ministry would be happy to continue this relationship of co-operative management through agreement. The Ministry would also provide facilities in a warming, orientation building for club meetings on a first come first serve basis.

### Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

The Dunes Area is ideal for the fast growing activities of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, because of its weather, snow cover and terrain. Additional areas are being sought actively by cross-country ski clubs. Provision of such an area, with facilities could bring additional people to Wasaga Beach, for skiing, and for special cross-country ski events.

This area would conform to Canadian Amateur Ski Association requirements for sanctioned events.

While there is no supply of cross-country equipment in Wasaga Beach, a market could develop easily if the activity were encouraged.

To develop this activity, the park would provide waxing and warming huts, trail orientation, groomed trails and natural trails, lunch spots and in the short term, equipment rental on a concession basis, until private enterprise could handle the demand for equipment.

These trails will be concentrated in the east part of the Dunes Area, away from the concentration of snowmobiles. To make this activity successful at Wasaga Beach, a lower level of snowmobiling in the Dunes Area may be required, as the two activities are not compatible.

## 7.3 Management Items

### Concessions

If private enterprise can provide required services, then the Provincial Park will not enter into competition through Park concessions. However, such basic items such as icecream, pop and snacks should be available to Beach users without them having to walk great distances. Such concessions on the Beach Areas will be tendered to private enterprise, or, if they are interested to local service organizations. The Provincial Park will start with trailer concessions, with mobility to find the best locations for public service.

For the rental of bicycles, cross-country skis, snowshoes, and the like, private enterprise will be encouraged to operate concessions. The park will only do so if this is not possible.

If camping is part of the Dunes Area, no grocery or supply concessions will be provided. Campers, being generally mobile, can rely on the town for such services.

### Fees

A fee of \$1.50 per day will be assessed against any cars that enter the Beach Area or the Dunes Area. People on foot or on Bicycles will pay no fee. Therefore, residents and cottagers would benefit by not driving to the beach, and tourists would benefit by leaving their vehicles at their place of accommodation. A fee paid will provide access to any of the Beach Areas or to the Dunes Area for day use.

If camping occurs, regular camping fees will apply, and will give access to all other park areas for day use.

Nancy Island under the management of the Provincial Park will have its fee structure changed to fit the park fee structure.

### Servicing

Central sewage and water systems will service most of the facilities in the Beach Area, but not those in the South Development Zone of the Dunes Area. In this area, facilities would be designed to operate on wells and septic systems or vault storage systems. Pumping and dumping of septic systems and vaults will only be carried out by approved operators with approved dumping sites.

Fire is always a hazard. The park will be equipped, and park staff trained in fire control. Building and structural fires, however, are not the Ministry's responsibility. M.N.R. will enter into agreements with municipal fire fighting units to protect the park in case of fire, on a cost-per-call basis.

Park garbage collection has been conducted by our own staff or tendered to contractors in the past. Every attempt will be made to tie in with the Municipal garbage collection system. However, the techniques and procedures for garbage collection will be determined after current review.

While the park will have its own security force, this will not take the place of the Ontario Provincial Police in any way. Park Conservation Officers and security staff will have jurisdiction only within park boundaries. These staff will still call on the O.P.P. for assistance in dangerous, volatile or criminal situations within park boundaries.

### Beach Patrol

Provincial Park Beach Patrol staff are not lifeguards and are not intended to relieve parents of any responsibility on the beach. The process of providing full lifeguarding on Wasaga Beach would require hundreds of staff. The Park will instead, provide marked beach patrol areas associated with the Beach Area units for peak hours of use. Persons wishing the extra security of having a person trained in swimming and water first aid should seek these areas out. Regular boat patrols will be carried out during peak hours of peak days to aid boaters and swimmers far from shore.

# 8. Administration & Staffing

## 8.1 Administration Centre

The existing park office is located at the end of Bay Street, almost centrally located along the beach. The tradition of its location, its being central, and the availability of existing park property here all suggest that the future administration complex should be in this same location.

With the development of the Dunes Area, a seasonal administrative facility will be required there as well, to eliminate an excessive amount of travel and transportation of equipment.

The main park office will be located across Bay Street on the east side from the existing office, and will house the majority of the permanent staff. This office will also serve a minor public information function. The existing park office will be maintained as a seasonal staff office, specifically for gate staff and beach interpretive staff. The existing block flat-roofed shed (called the Barn) will house beach patrol equipment and act as a seasonal office and training area for beach patrol staff. A four bay maintenance shed will be required, west of Bay Street to house grounds grooming equipment and staff, a carpentry-workshop area, and equipment maintenance. (Refer to Fig. 18)

The Dunes Area will eventually require a sub-office for campground staff and interpretive staff, and a small maintenance shed for equipment storage and maintenance.

Such buildings should be winterized to be easily used when year round use develops, or in conjunction with specific winter activities or events.

## 8.2 Peak Staff Requirements

<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>Permanent Staff</u>	<u>Seasonal Staff</u>
Administration	1 Park Superintendent 1 Clerk 1 Stenographer	1 Clerk
Operations	1 Operations Supervisor 1 Park Technician	1 Beach Patrol Captain 24 Beach Patrol 1 Head Gateman 24 Gate Staff
Maintenance	1 Maintenance Foreman 1 Beach Assistant Foreman 1 Dunes Assistant Foreman 1 Grounds Grooming Foreman	28 Beach Maintenance 16 Dunes Maintenance 8 Grounds Grooming
Visitor Services	1 Visitor Services Programmer 2 Interpreters 1 Visitor Services Technician	10 Visitor Services-Interpretation
Security	2 Park Conservation officers	10 Security Staff
	15 Permanent Staff	123 Seasonal

Of the permanent staff required, four are now established positions and eleven are not filled as yet but should be over the next three years.

## 8.3 Phasing

General phasing calls for establishment of basic facilities along the whole of the Beach Area as rapidly as possible. (Such development includes road systems, parking areas, washrooms and change houses, basic landscaping, playgrounds, picnic areas and shelters, and special features such as the boardwalk). Assuming that Area 1 and Area 5 will have their basic facilities this summer, then 2, 3, 4 and Flos would follow next year, with 6 the year after that.

Once this basic development is finished, then specialized facilities will be added as the surrounding community areas develop, and as demand suggests. These would include boardwalk extensions, beach transit systems, interpretive and information facilities, recreation equipment, adventure playgrounds, etcetera.

Delayed a year or so, pending property acquisition, will be the Dunes Area which will be fully developed over a three year period.

In all a total budget in excess of \$3 million has been allotted to park development in forthcoming years.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Development</u>
1974-75	Development of Basic facilities Beach Areas 1 and 5 plus some facilities in Flos and Beach Area 2
1975-76	Development of Basic facilities, Flos Beach, Beach Areas 2, 3 and 4  Initial development in Dunes Area (Roads-Trails)
1976-77	Development of Basic facilities Beach Area 6  Expansion of facilities Flos to Beach Area 5  Dunes Area development (Campgrounds, Education and Visitor Centre) more trails  Development of Park link areas
1977-78	Expansion of Beach Area facilities  Dunes area development-administrative, campground, trails
1978-79	Facility enrichment for Beach Areas and Dunes areas. Primarily recreation interpretation and information facilities

## 9. Summary

The master plan process is usually lengthy and often complex. The product which results from this process, a "Master Plan" is only a document or a series of illustrations. Such a result is generally based on existing knowledge, current uses and projected demands, and cannot effectively account for sudden economic, social or physical changes. For this reason, the Ministry of Natural Resources continually audits its programmes and reviews such plans every five years. At these times, necessary changes are made.

In the case of Wasaga Beach, the plan for the provincial park must evaluate numerous factors such as public roads, sewers and community structures. This is not the norm for this ministry and as a first effort, many deficiencies may be contained. In the long run the park plans must be in accord with the Official Plan for the Town of Wasaga Beach.

Finally, this master plan is two things: It is *preliminary*, and it is a *public document*. These facts necessarily mean that the interested public should become involved in the master planning process by reacting and responding to the contained information. Only then can an accurate and responsible *final* plan be prepared.

# Comment Sheet

return to:



Ministry of  
Natural  
Resources

Ontario

**District Manager  
Huron District Office  
Midhurst, Ontario  
L0L 1X0**

---

Your comments regarding the Preliminary Master Plan for Wasaga Beach Provincial Park will be helpful in preparing final policies and planning directions. The map on the other side and the spaces provided are designed as a guide but not a limit to your reactions to the proposal and issues identified in this plan.

General Remarks re: Park Development concepts, goals and objectives.

Comments regarding specific issues as identified in Sections 5, 6 and 7.  
e.g. Snowmobiling, Camping, Powerline Road, Nancy Island Museum.



Nottawasaga Bay

Beach Areas

Dunes Area

Wasaga Beach Provincial Park









3 1761 11548340 6